

Town Meeting

Concerning the

U.S. Department of Energy

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement:

Site Selection for the Expansion of
the Strategic Petroleum Reserve

Date: Thursday, April 10, 2008

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 10:15 p.m.

Location: Pascagoula Civic Center
Shortcut Road
Pascagoula, Mississippi

Rheannon R. Miller, CCR

1 MR. JOHNSON: I'll bring this meeting to
2 order. My name is David Johnson. I'm with the
3 Office of Oil Reserves, the U.S. Department of
4 Energy. The U.S. Department of Energy selected the
5 Richton Salt Dome in Perry County, Mississippi in
6 2007 to be the location of a new 160 million barrel
7 storage site for the Strategic Oil Reserve.

8 Since this selection, there have been a
9 number of environmental and public concerns raised
10 with respect to the location of our raw water
11 source, our brine disposal, as well as where we are
12 proposing locating our oil terminal. As a result,
13 we have initiated the preparation of a supplemental
14 EIS to address these concerns, to work with the
15 communities and the environmental groups to resolve
16 these issues.

17 This week we have held public meetings in
18 Perry, Greene, George and now in Jackson County.
19 These meetings were all conducted in an open house
20 forum, to provide as much information on the
21 project as we can, but to also interact with the
22 public and to understand the concerns.

23 At the request of Congressman Taylor, we
24 have added this Town Hall portion to this meeting,
25 to receive public comments directly to us in a

1 customary fashion.

2 At this point I would like to introduce
3 Karen Faley (phonetic), who will discuss the
4 procedures for this portion.

5 MS. FALEY: Thank you. In a few moments
6 we will be starting the public hearing portion of
7 tonight. First, I want to remind people that right
8 now we are in the process that is referred to as
9 scoping. The purpose of collecting comments during
10 the scoping period is to figure out what the
11 environmental concerns are, how we should best
12 conduct our environmental analysis and what range
13 of alternatives you need to consider in our
14 documents.

15 We will be continuing to accept comments
16 through the scoping period, until April 29th. We
17 will then conduct our environmental study in detail
18 over the next year and expect to have our draft
19 environmental impact statement prepared some time
20 next Spring.

21 At that point, the document will be
22 distributed to citizens who are on our mailing and
23 who requested a copy, state and local officials.
24 It will be available in public libraries. It will
25 also be available on the Internet. And we will

1 give you 45 days to review the document and to
2 comment on that document.

3 At that time we will come back and have
4 more meetings, just as this, in order to receive
5 comments on the draft environmental impact
6 statement. Then we will go back and we will revise
7 that document, publish the final environmental
8 impact statement in August 2009, or some time in
9 the early Fall.

10 And then after a 30-day no-action period,
11 where the decision makers consider the document,
12 they will make a decision and publish it in the
13 Federal Register as a Record of Decision.

14 There are several opportunities to
15 comment. At all of our open houses we have had a
16 court reporter available to receive oral comments,
17 as well as we have had forms where people can
18 either submit their comments in writing during the
19 meetings or take them home and consider the
20 information they have been given and mail them in.

21 As I said, we will be accepting comments
22 until April 29th. You can write your comments in
23 by e-mail or by mail. You may also fax them to us.
24 Or you may continue to sign up and speak tonight.

25 Now, the way that we will be holding the

1 public hearing portion is I will call speakers as
2 they have signed up to the microphone to talk.
3 Only comments that are made at the microphone will
4 be recorded into the record. We do have a court
5 reporter present. I will call elected officials
6 first and then I will call everyone as they appear
7 on the registration list.

8 Now, right now I have probably thirty-plus
9 people that have signed up. And I also want to
10 make additional time available for people who want
11 to continue to sign up. Because we have so many
12 people we are going to limit the time to about two
13 to three minutes. I have a card here -- the
14 yellow, I will give you a one-minute warning; red,
15 I will ask you politely to please stop your
16 comments, so that other people may make comments.

17 Again, the purpose of making comments is
18 for scoping. We will not be answering questions,
19 again because of the number of people that want to
20 comment. But DOE staff will continue to be
21 available throughout the evening, after the public
22 hearing portion is over, in order to answer
23 people's questions.

24 When you come up -- when I call your name
25 and you come up to speak, please state your name

1 clearly and spell your name, so that the court
2 reporter has an accurate record.

3 At this time I would like to begin the
4 public hearing by calling Bill Felder of
5 Congressman Taylor's office to the microphone to
6 speak.

7 MR. FELDER: Thank you. My name is Bill
8 Felder. I am here representing Congressman Gene
9 Taylor. I am here to read a statement into the
10 record.

11 Today the Congressman actually sent this
12 letter to the Honorable Stanley W. Bodman
13 (phonetic), U.S. Department of Energy. The
14 statement: In December I sent a letter to the
15 Department of Energy urging the Agency to hold
16 additional hearings, so that the Agency can
17 directly hear the questions and concerns of the
18 people of South Mississippi.

19 In addition, I, along with Senators
20 Cochran and Wicker, sent the Department an
21 additional letter asking them to hold more
22 hearings. I would like to thank the Department of
23 Energy for complying with the requests and for
24 taking the time to answer the questions and
25 concerns from the people of South Mississippi.

1 The Department of Energy must do this
2 project right or not do it at all. I will only
3 support the project if the Department draws the
4 water used to hollow out the dome from the Gulf of
5 Mexico instead of the Leaf or Pascagoula Rivers.

6 Also, the Department must dispose of the
7 brine well south of the barrier islands, using the
8 Naval Oceanographic Office, Stennis Space Center to
9 determine the best method of brine disposal, to
10 avoid any harmful environmental impact occurring
11 from the project in the Gulf of Mexico.

12 I support the creation of an additional
13 Strategic Petroleum Reserve site in Richton, but it
14 must be carried out with community input and
15 minimal environmental impact. The people of
16 Mississippi have the right to have their voices
17 heard on such an important project that has the
18 potential impact to so many. I cannot emphasize
19 this strongly enough.

20 If these conditions are met, I will
21 support the project. However, I am letting it be
22 known in advance if the Department of Energy does
23 not meet these conditions, I will not support any
24 funding of this project.

25 Thank you very much.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MR. FELDER: I have a copy of the letter
3 for the media if anybody would like it. Thank you.

4 MS. FALEY: The other elected official
5 that we have signed up is Deborah Dawkins from the
6 Mississippi State Senate.

7 SENATOR DAWKINS: Thank you. I am sorry,
8 Mr. Johnson, but I had asked that there be a podium
9 available for the citizens to use and this is not
10 exactly what I had in mind. But I'm sure you won't
11 mind if I do this, and if others want to use the
12 podium. Sometimes it makes it easier, if you have
13 paperwork.

14 I am Deborah Dawkins, State Senator from
15 District 48. I represent the Mississippi Gulf
16 Coast in the Mississippi State Senate. And I took
17 an oath to represent all the people of Mississippi.
18 And I would argue that this issue faces the entire
19 state of Mississippi.

20 One, the Pascagoula River watershed is
21 unique and important. And how it works -- I hope
22 some of you -- I hope all of you after tonight look
23 at the Nature Conservancy DVD on the Pascagoula
24 called The Singing River: Rhythms of Nature. I
25 was given a copy. It was narrated by Gerald

1 McRaney, a local boy. I plan to file a copy of the
2 DVD into the USDOE's Agency record of this project.

3

4 Mr. Johnson, do you have an attorney here
5 tonight? Is there an attorney with your
6 Department?

7 MR. JOHNSON: No.

8 SENATOR DAWKINS: Well, the attorneys, I
9 am sure, will tell you that you will need to watch
10 this.

11 MR. JOHNSON: I have watched it.

12 SENATOR DAWKINS: You have watched it?

13 Very good. He has watched it.

14 My remarks will be drawn from the Nature
15 Conservancy DVD, with apology to the scientists and
16 the alligator farmers for any mistakes I make.

17 The Pascagoula Basin is an artery of life.
18 It is one of the largest protected river corridors
19 in the U.S. It is free to flood and recede with
20 the seasons, part of a vast life cycle with no
21 levees, no dams. It is unobstructed by man, so it
22 floods out into the bottomland hardwood forest.
23 The Spring floods are life giving. The back swamp
24 has not been cut off by the river -- from the river
25 by man, so far. The plant and animal species that

1 live in the Basin are adapted to water being
2 present most of the year.

3 If we allow you to alter it with this
4 proposed pipeline and construction of roads and oil
5 tank farm, the entire system will change forever.
6 Hundreds of tributaries flowing to the Leaf and
7 Chickasawhay, which flow into the Pascagoula,
8 developing a life-creating engine composed of
9 streams, oxbow lakes, freshwater swamps, bayous,
10 saltwater marshes, which drain into the watershed,
11 into the Gulf. The health of every part of the
12 watershed is dependant on every other part.

13 The North-South forest in the Basin is
14 complex and vertically stratified, similar to a
15 tropical forest. You can still see what James
16 Audubon saw when you go out there. That is why it
17 draws scientists and fishers and artists and people
18 on vacation and brings our economy a huge boon,
19 which we need in the state of Mississippi.

20 Over 300 species of birds use the Basin at
21 some point in the year all around. It is a crucial
22 habitat for migratory birds and supports up to 80
23 percent of all of the birds found in Mississippi.
24 Our migrating birds need a place to stop and feed
25 and then go on. And I don't know where they'd go

1 if they didn't have the Pascagoula River Basin.

2 For example, approximately 200
3 swallow-tail types are in the Basin during the
4 breeding season. Swallow-tail types have a 50-inch
5 wingspan, which means they are about that tall
6 (indicating).

7 The forestry and estuary supports at least
8 100,000 other life forms. The habitat is on par
9 with anything you could find in Belize or Costa
10 Rica or other tropical areas. There are huge
11 deciduous trees. And the aquatic life is more
12 diverse.

13 Graham Wisner and his family's company,
14 the Pascagoula Hardwood Company, saved 32,000 acres
15 in the Basin by selling it to the State of
16 Mississippi years ago. This began the national
17 idea of public/private partnership to preserve,
18 conserve and restore.

19 The Pascagoula is a spot where man has not
20 yet been able to mess it up. We need to take their
21 example as a clarion call to fight to preserve,
22 conserve and restore God's creation.

23 Now, this proposed project is unwanted,
24 unnecessary and impractical. But besides that, it
25 would be really difficult, if not impossible, to do

1 it because of the nature of the ground. Anything
2 big and heavy enough to tear up the ground and dig
3 a ditch for a 100-mile-long pipeline would just get
4 stuck. There are mud holes out there. Anyone who
5 has been out there knows heavy equipment can't
6 operate out there. I believe the construction
7 would be louder and worse than I am seeing on the
8 presentations in there.

9 Ecosystems all exist in relationship to
10 one another. The fresh water flowing out of the
11 Gulf (sic) affects the Gulf. Because it is a
12 healthy river system, fresh water flow helps the
13 life in the Gulf. Fish species that no longer
14 exist elsewhere still exist in the Pascagoula
15 estuary. And you know I am talking about the
16 endangered Gulf sturgeon for one.

17 The tidal salt water flow affects the life
18 of the river and is dependant on the river. Once
19 this is disrupted, man does not have the power to
20 restore it; certainly not the Federal Government.
21 This habitat cannot be mitigated. The Pascagoula
22 is a critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon, as I
23 said. What will the construction and water
24 withdrawal do to these anadromous fish that breed
25 in the river and live in the Sound? What would it

1 do to the Mississippi Sandhill Crane?

2 There are hundreds of archeological sites
3 in the Pascagoula Basin. Scientists come from all
4 over the world to research the Indian sites. What
5 will happen to these? Has the USDOE complied with
6 the applicable Federal law requiring a survey of
7 Indian archeological sites?

8 And I know the Mississippi Department of
9 Archives and History has not had an opportunity to
10 do that. And even if they had the opportunity to
11 do it, I can tell you for sure they don't have the
12 money.

13 Mussels are an indicator of the overall
14 ecosystem health. They are abundant here because
15 the Pascagoula Basin offers a refuge to aquatic
16 species, which as a group comprise 50 percent of
17 the endangered species nationwide.

18 The Pascagoula Basin has not been dammed
19 and fragmented and leveed, like other parts of the
20 country. The parts that were not protected, we can
21 go and see the damage there. The lands were
22 invaded by non-native species. The water quality
23 suffered in the '90s, but is beginning to recover
24 and is stable, but precarious.

25 To paraphrase directly from the conclusion

1 of the DVD, the Pascagoula is alive and healthy,
2 flowing freely, with the natural cycles of life.
3 It will only stay valuable and become more valuable
4 if we allow it to survive intact. It is an
5 intangible resource that the citizens of
6 Mississippi cannot afford to lose for a Government
7 boondoggle.

8 The proposal is to remove fresh water from
9 the river and convert it to brine, as I understand
10 it, at a time when fresh water is of increasing
11 value every day. The brine would kill the
12 Mississippi Sound. The salt water would flow
13 further north -- this is the salt water wedge we
14 refer to -- further north due to decreased water
15 flow. The road and general construction would
16 increase traffic and associated development would
17 cause pollution in the river.

18 This is a half-baked plan, poorly thought
19 out, like the public hearing in Jackson after
20 Katrina or the response --

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 SENATOR DAWKINS: As vice-chair of the
23 Senate Committee on Environmental Protection it is
24 my job to be here tonight and let everyone know
25 that what you already know is right. This is a bad

1 idea, a horrible idea, and I intend to fight it
2 every step that they try to take.

3 (APPLAUSE.)

4 SENATOR DAWKINS: As State Senator, I am
5 calling on the U.S. Department of Energy to request
6 that every Mississippi State agency and every
7 Federal resource agency and the Corps of Engineers
8 submit its entire file on the Pascagoula River
9 Basin to the USDOE for consideration and computer
10 models be developed prior to making a decision.

11 I am also today, right now, filing a
12 complete file of every Mississippi agency and every
13 Federal resource agency on the Pascagoula River
14 Basin into the USDOE Agency record for this matter,
15 quote, As is copied verbatim and in extenso, all of
16 it.

17 I will follow up specifically to get the
18 State's data for you, but it is now legally in the
19 Agency's record -- your lawyers will tell you this
20 -- all of it and you must by law consider it and
21 include the data in your computer modeling, to be
22 considered before any decisions are made, whether
23 to go forward or not, on the Pascagoula River
24 project.

25 I am also calling for an extension of this

1 public comment period -- April 29th is just -- it
2 is very unreasonable -- to allow time for me to
3 file a FOIA request and Public Records Act request
4 for this data and deliver it to you for inclusion
5 within your computer models. But you at USDOE can
6 do that. And I am sure that these agencies will be
7 willing to cooperate with this request for
8 information, made in good faith, made with the idea
9 of developing accurate computer models of the River
10 Basin as it exists today and as it would exist if
11 you decided to go forward and if you are allowed to
12 go forward.

13 Your computer modeling must show how the
14 proposed diversions will affect the ship channels
15 at the mouth and in the Mississippi Sound and
16 explain who will pay for correcting any shulling
17 (phonetic) that occurs because -- once again, I
18 promise you the Mississippi cannot afford to do it.

19 It needs to examine whether or not the
20 proposed project would be consistent with, Number
21 1, the Mississippi Coastal Restoration Plan; Number
22 2, the plan by the Army Corps of Engineers to
23 construct a series of levees and ring levees up and
24 down the coast; Number 3, the plan to expand and
25 improve the Pascagoula Harbor; Number 4, the

1 protection of the entire Pascagoula River as a
2 critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon; Number 5,
3 the Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge; and anything
4 else I can think of before the extended public
5 comment period ends.

6 Thank you.

7 (APPLAUSE.)

8 MR. JOHNSON: I want to thank you. And if
9 anybody else wants to use the podium up here, they
10 are welcome to do that.

11 MS. FALEY: I would like to call Julie
12 O'Neil (phonetic) to make her comments.

13 MS. O'NEIL: I understand from the
14 presentations we saw in the other room that the
15 reason the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is being
16 raised is because we have to have 90 days' worth of
17 petroleum. And it's an international agreement
18 that everyone -- every country has to have 90 days'
19 worth of petroleum.

20 And I propose that instead of -- wouldn't
21 it just be a little bit more strategic to lessen
22 our dependence on oil? 3.5 billion would go a long
23 way toward subsidizing conversion boxes for net
24 metering, solar panels and windmills. A couple of
25 solar panels after Katrina would have made all the

1 difference; a fan, a light, a television. And a
2 good solar array could have operated a pump. We
3 couldn't get any gas. We could also do things like
4 encourage higher mileage in cars, tax gasoline.

5 But let's not kid ourselves. The SPR is
6 not for the people. The SPR is for some kind of
7 military accident. And that's not what we want or
8 need.

9 Thank you.

10 (APPLAUSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Thank you. I'd like to call
12 Don Johnson of the Gulf Coast Research Lab.

13 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening. I am Don
14 Johnson, a physical oceanographer. I have retired
15 from the Naval Research Lab at Stennis Space Center
16 and I am currently associated with the Gulf Coast
17 Research Lab.

18 I have two concerns about the placement of
19 the Richton site. The first is that it is in an
20 area of very minimal alongshore subtidal currents,
21 which are necessary for sweeping this stuff away.
22 And the second is its nearness to the channels for
23 entrance into the Mississippi Sound and an avenue
24 for a lot of our species that use both the ocean
25 and the estuaries for their life history cycle.

1 I have put a little thing over here. I
2 hope you can see this. I guess you could -- can
3 you see it in the back?

4 (COMMENTS FROM THE CROWD.)

5 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Harriet, do your
6 Vanna White thing.

7 (LAUGHTER.)

8 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. What I did is a very
9 simple fluid dynamasis approach to where the fluid
10 would flow to. And it's just taking the -- I think
11 the same current meter records, the bottom current
12 meter record that was referred to in your report.
13 And every three hours for the duration of this
14 record, which is a Springtime record of about 45
15 days, I released a point. And the diffuser site is
16 right in the center. And just following it,
17 tracing out the path of the parcels of water, it's
18 not a matter of how much it diffused; it's just
19 where the parcels would go.

20 You can see the large cloud. And it's --
21 right now it doesn't tell you much about the
22 density or the increase in salinity in it. But it
23 tells you which direction it's going. And it's
24 going right through the Pascagoula entrance.

25 All right. Let's take a look at the

1 second one. Do you want to hold the second one up
2 over here? This is the same current meter, bottom
3 current meter. I call it the Danelle (phonetic)
4 Number 4. It's the Number 4 mooring site from
5 Scott Danelle's thesis. And you can see the
6 diffusion is kind of along the Mississippi barrier
7 islands.

8 While she has got this up, I'd like to
9 point out that we are in sort of a corner over
10 here. It's a stagnation point for alongshore
11 currents. If you take a look at the
12 Louisiana-Texas shelf you will see that it is a
13 wide-open shelf, with these sweeping, storm-driven
14 currents that come across there.

15 Okay. Let's do the next one. Now, what I
16 have done is I have compared the two shelves. What
17 you see is the dispersion from the Bis Hill
18 (phonetic) site. That is in black here. And for
19 the same duration of currents -- one is the Spring
20 and the other is the -- early Spring and one is the
21 late Summer. And that is in black. And the whole
22 scale here is from 200 kilometers on this side
23 minus 200 kilometers. So it's 400 kilometers
24 across the whole site. A big scale. There is a
25 lot of diffusion going on in the Texas shelf.

1 Compared to that with the red -- what you just saw
2 for the Richton site. So the diffusion on the
3 Texas shelf, which has been calibrated and it looks
4 like the diffusion is pretty well -- it's a pretty
5 diffuse site, so there wasn't much of an impact.
6 It's an order of a magnitude worse over here than
7 it is in the Texas shelf.

8 All right. Let's look at the second
9 problem and that's the nearness to the estuaries.
10 You may not be able to see this very well, but I
11 have plotted some of the current vectors of -- in a
12 normal estuary there is an outflow at the surface
13 of fresh water and an inflow at the bottom of the
14 salty water. And this is a multi-port estuary, the
15 Mississippi Sound is. You can see that the -- in
16 the Pascagoula channel there is very strong
17 currents coming in at the bottom. There is a
18 little scale at the top, 10 centimeters per second.
19 These are fairly consistent currents coming in at
20 the bottom. So it's near a site where the entrance
21 into the Mississippi Sound, or our estuary, is very
22 strong.

23 The problem here is not just salt flooding
24 the estuary. The problem is salt blocking the
25 estuary from those species which want to sense the

1 fresh water outflow. And though they are near an
2 estuary, it can change their behavior. Like the
3 blue crab, female blue crabs migrate down to the
4 entrance to the estuary and spawn on an ebbing
5 tide. Their larvae go to sea for the next 30 to 40
6 days. They float around at the surface, under the
7 influence of the wind, generally during -- the peak
8 spawning is during July. And the winds are blowing
9 gently towards the -- ebb currents gently toward
10 the east. In August they turn and blow them back
11 toward the west.

12 Now, at some time in there they will
13 descend to the bottom. They are tiny little
14 things. They descend to the bottom, grab hold of
15 the bottom on an ebbing tide, release on a flooding
16 tide, and come in with the flooding tide. That is
17 how they get into the estuaries.

18 The problem that I have with this is that
19 they cannot sense that there is a low salinity
20 output through that passageway. It is blocked to
21 them and they don't know where they are. Okay? So
22 that is one species of a number of species that use
23 the channel. So it's way too near these channels.

24 Okay. That's my input. Thank you very
25 much.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. FALEY: I'd like to call Pat
3 Patterson.

4 MR. PATTERSON: Good evening. Pat
5 Patterson, P-A-T P-A-T-T-E-R-S-O-N. I am a
6 resident of Jackson County.

7 I have spent a good part of my life
8 working on conservation issues on the Pascagoula
9 River. I have hunted there. I have fished there.
10 And I want to add a little bit to what Deborah
11 Dawkins said and kind of put some historic
12 perspective in this and then make a couple of
13 points.

14 The early 1970s, the State of Mississippi
15 and the Nature Conservancy entered into an
16 agreement to buy the Pascagoula River Basin, 32,000
17 acres of hardwood bottomland forest. And they did
18 this with public money. They floated a bond issue.
19 And it's the first time in the country that
20 conservation bonds had been sold. As a result the
21 Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area belongs
22 to the citizens of the state of Mississippi.

23 Since then, another 6,000 to 7,000 acres
24 have been added. And the associated estuaries and
25 wetlands make it one of the largest systems in

1 North America. And, as Deborah pointed out, it is
2 relatively unchannelized and undisturbed. And this
3 is important because it is a national treasure.

4 I want to make a couple of points in light
5 of that. And I want to encourage DOE in this next
6 year, as they do the supplemental EIS, to evaluate
7 all the data. We have looked at your EIS and it is
8 pretty slipshod. It looks like a cut and paste
9 job. You don't have a lot of supplemental
10 information in it, appendices, quoting data.
11 Ms. Dawkins is fixing to send you a bunch of that.
12 But in addition to the data, which can be
13 interpreted any way you want to, I would like to
14 see the Governor of the State of Mississippi and
15 agency heads empower the scientists that work here
16 to not only provide the data, but help you
17 interpret that data, just like we saw this minute.
18 That is very important.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MR. PATTERSON: And I think that if you
21 take one thing away from this meeting, what you
22 hear tonight, it is that you realize that this
23 river system is a national treasure and not a
24 national toilet for you to pump and flush at your
25 convenience.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. FALEY: The person I am going to call
3 -- I can't read it very clearly, but I believe it's
4 Lonnie -- and it either starts with a P or an R.
5 It's either Lonnie or Lorrie. It's the second name
6 on one of the sheets.

7 MS. ROBICHAUX: Is it Lorrie Robichaux?

8 MS. FALEY: Yes.

9 MS. ROBICHAUX: Lorrie Robichaux,
10 R-O-B-I-C-H-A-U-X, citizen of Jackson County,
11 resident of Pascagoula, Mississippi.

12 I am here to voice my opposition to the
13 Richton Salt Dome project.

14 Have you really done an in-depth study of
15 the effect that this project will have on the
16 marine life in the Gulf of Mexico? I am just a
17 novice on the environmental impact, but it boggles
18 my mind that 50 million gallons of extremely salt
19 water will be pumped into the Gulf of Mexico and
20 not have a fatal impact on the marine life in the
21 Gulf.

22 Balance of nature, what does that mean?
23 It means -- if you remember years ago we had a
24 commercial on television, Do not mess with Mother
25 Nature. Marine life, crabs, shrimp, fish,

1 plankton, oysters, survive and thrive on the
2 balance of nature. That means a balance of water,
3 fresh, salt, brackish.

4 What effect will the taking of 50 million
5 gallons of water from our rivers do? People and
6 industry depend on fresh water from the rivers to
7 live with. Around the United States today there is
8 concern about a shortage of fresh water. We have
9 fresh water here. What are we going to do about
10 it?

11 Pascagoula River is the last natural
12 flowing, pristine river in the United States. Let
13 us leave it alone.

14 Is the Gulf sturgeon on the endangered
15 list? And I believe that was mentioned. Yes. We
16 definitely need to protect it, as we do other
17 species that are on the endangered list.

18 I haven't mentioned jobs. What will the
19 price of 250 jobs be if we have no fresh water, no
20 fishing, no seafood? It is a price too high.

21 I thank you.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: Fred Lemon (phonetic).

24 MR. LEMON: Mr. Johnson, I am going to
25 take you up on using this mic up here. I like

1 looking at people when I talk to them.

2 I am Fred Lemon, an Ocean Springs small
3 businessman, small cattle rancher, small timber
4 farmer, small mineral lease holder, but big on
5 Mississippi.

6 I woke up at 4:00 this morning thinking
7 about this. And I thought it's real simple, you
8 know, and the Government, I'm sorry, but they don't
9 get things real simple anymore. It's pluses and
10 minuses. And they have too many minuses and we
11 have plenty of pluses. And I am so happy to see
12 this meeting room filled because I was at the last
13 meeting and there was only eight people, Mr.
14 Johnson, or 12. Nobody. Now, it was right after
15 the storm.

16 I also helped fight and get out of here
17 the atomic waste dump. They tried to go in this
18 salt dome. What a joke that was. And they spent
19 five billion dollars and they still don't have that
20 stuff in the Yucca Mountains in Nevada where it
21 belongs and where they agreed to put it. Put that
22 up and then we can look at this.

23 But this is ridiculous from start to
24 finish. I have got a couple of points.

25 No one has spoke about the potable water.

1 Our water supply for the Mississippi coast runs
2 right around and through and under these salt
3 domes. And if we lose our fresh water, we are
4 going to be in a bad spot. And, also -- and I am
5 not going to take you too long, but I do want to
6 tell you too that I haven't talked to one person,
7 not one person, who was for this crazy deal that
8 they have come up with. So I just can't understand
9 why the Feds keep pushing it. And they need to
10 stop. And I am glad to see Gene Taylor. He should
11 be here tonight, so he could get a feeling of this
12 crowd.

13 I want to make one more point. I don't
14 want to take up too much of your time. But I also
15 own, as I said, some minerals. The Government or
16 nobody, the oil companies have tried to lease these
17 minerals in 30 years. We have got oil and gas here
18 that we can stick a hole down and pump it up. And
19 let's don't get this crazy deal going.

20 I do want to make another point, too, on
21 this deal. They say this is going to be about a
22 six-day supply and it's going to cost us three to
23 four billion dollars. I'd say that's more like six
24 or eight billion dollars it's going to cost us to
25 do this. And it's ridiculous. And when it was set

1 up by Congress oil was about \$30 a barrel. Now
2 it's \$110 a barrel.

3 I won't keep going. I have a lot of other
4 points, but I won't keep going. But I thank you
5 very much.

6 (APPLAUSE.)

7 MS. FALEY: James Newman.

8 MR. NOONAN: I am James Newman. I am from
9 George County. That's where all our fresh water
10 comes from. I've been on the Pascagoula River and
11 in the Pascagoula River Basin probably for the last
12 44 or 45 years. If you ever ate catfish in the
13 late '60s and the early '70s at Mississippi Coffee
14 Pot in Lucedale, I probably caught them. And that
15 is another story.

16 But we could catch catfish in the daytime
17 and walk down on the edge of the sandbar and catch
18 these freshwater shrimp, which only two rivers in
19 the United States have, and fix them for supper.
20 If you suck all that water out of the Pascagoula
21 River, they are going to drown.

22 Back in the '60s there was a group of us
23 commercial fishermen that kept water level charts.
24 And the only information we could get was from
25 Maryland. And we kept those charts on the rise and

1 the fall of the Pascagoula River for about seven
2 years. I don't have them now. Billy had them and
3 he's dead now. But there was two constants you
4 could always depend on in the Pascagoula River, you
5 would have flood water in the Spring and you would
6 have a low point water in the Fall. Those
7 constants have changed a little bit over the last
8 few years. We haven't had the floods in the Spring
9 that we have had. But we have had the low waters
10 that we have always had. And the last two years
11 they have even been lower than what they have been
12 in the past.

13 And the other day I saw on television
14 where you said that taking 50 million gallons of
15 water a day out of the Pascagoula River would only
16 drop it one inch. That kind of talk scares me.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MR. NEWMAN: And if you add the industrial
19 water system that is capable of pulling 25 million
20 gallons of water right out of -- right over here at
21 Cumbest Bluff at the same time and it all starts
22 sucking that water out in October, what in the
23 world are those catfish or the shrimp or all of
24 these other things going to do?

25 I have seen a lot of things in the

1 Pascagoula River Basin that most people have never
2 seen. But I have never caught a sturgeon. Never
3 have.

4 A few years ago a man standing in the same
5 position that you are in right now stopped and told
6 us that they were going to put this industry in
7 Perry County that would put a few jobs in our
8 community and stuff like that. But a few years
9 later that industry dried up the commercial
10 fishing. It dried up all of the catfish -- as it
11 went on. It took the jingle out of my pocket
12 instead of putting the jingle in it.

13 That's basically about it. One other
14 thing I'd like to say, though, Mr. Johnson. If I
15 told you that the world was going to come to the
16 end tomorrow, would you believe me? No. Why? You
17 would say because you don't know what you're
18 talking about. And I'm going to say something, you
19 say this, by pulling 50 million gallons of water
20 out of that Pascagoula River a day it will drop
21 that level one inch, I don't think you know what
22 you're talking about.

23 (APPLAUSE.)

24 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Jan
25 Cambre. The speaker after that will be Alan

1 Taylor.

2 MS. CAMBRE: I'm Jan Cambre, C-A-M-B-R-E.
3 I am completely opposed to the entire SPR project
4 to expand its storage capacity at the Richton Salt
5 Dome site. The environmental impact to the
6 Pascagoula River ecosystem is not something I am
7 willing to gamble with, nor are the possible
8 effects on the Mississippi Sound from the briny
9 salt water that will be dumped there. The price of
10 freedom or security for our country should not come
11 at the cost of the very land where we live.

12 (APPLAUSE.)

13 MS. CAMBRE: What is to be protected that
14 has been destroyed? I cannot understand why our
15 leaders would welcome this project as being good
16 for Mississippi. The price for storing a product
17 that is clearly running out as a fuel of choice in
18 the long-term future of our planet makes no sense
19 when compared to tampering with an ecosystem that
20 has been in place for tens of thousands of years.

21 In this day and age when other states are
22 arguing over water rights, how can the daily
23 withdrawal of 50 million gallons of fresh water
24 over a period of more than five years for use in
25 making a contaminant be justified?

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. CAMBRE: Common sense sees this as an
3 ill-conceived project. This is not the kind of
4 development that our state needs. One would wonder
5 who would really benefit from this plan as I cannot
6 see any good for the people who live here.

7 (APPLAUSE.)

8 MS. FALEY: Mike Jenkins. And then the
9 next speaker will be Robert Hardy.

10 MR. JENKINS: My name is Mike Jenkins. I
11 am a citizen of Jackson County and I am opposed to
12 this.

13 I am looking down here and it said: What
14 issues would a supplemental EIS analyze? And I
15 look at several things and it says: Water
16 resources, including the quality and quantity. I
17 think that has been addressed by several other
18 people and I concur with their opinions.

19 Not only would it affect the wildlife, the
20 fishes and marine, but it will also affect the
21 ground water, our drinking water.

22 As far as the public health and safety, I
23 have been impacted by what Katrina did to the
24 people down here in Jackson County. I know that
25 Katrina pushed salt water all the way up to the

1 George County line. I know it killed fresh water
2 fishes all the way up there. And I don't see where
3 there is anything positive in this for us.

4 As far as the economic impact, the few
5 jobs that would be added in Perry County, as such,
6 I am afraid there would be minimal impact. Chevron
7 right now has 5,000 construction jobs going on. In
8 a few weeks they will be up to 8,000. There is
9 plenty of work down here for construction people.

10 If you want to pull in another 100 or 200
11 jobs in Perry County, where are you going to get
12 the people from to do this? They are coming from
13 out of state. They are not helping Mississippi
14 people.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MR. JENKINS: In conclusion, I am in
17 opposition to this. I appreciate some of the fine
18 comments that have been made and thank you for this
19 opportunity.

20 (APPLAUSE.)

21 MS. FALEY: Robert Hardy is next, followed
22 by Dr. Saeed Mulkana.

23 MR. HARDY: Good evening. Robert Hardy.
24 I am a citizen of Pascagoula.

25 I went away from 35 years and came back

1 here by choice. I didn't come back by choice for
2 this. If it looks like a duck and waddles, it's a
3 duck. This is a bad idea. It's a bureaucratic
4 boondoggle to support big oil.

5 I want to talk briefly about a couple of
6 options. Our Governor, our distinguished Governor
7 has a lobbying company in Washington, D.C. The
8 vice president of that organization is the former
9 chairman or the chief of staff of the Department of
10 Energy. Over the last three years Barbour's
11 lobbying group has been paid 3.2 million dollars by
12 the American Pipeline Association, the Indonesian
13 Oil Tankers Association, the largest single oil
14 broker in Amsterdam, plus three other petrochemical
15 companies. Conflict of interest. He supports this
16 boondoggle.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MR. HARDY: Number 2, when we had the Arab
19 oil embargo in 1973, in the Jimmy Carter era, the
20 knee jerk of Congress was to pass legislation and
21 fund the Department of Energy. And just doing a
22 rough guess, the Department of Energy has been
23 funded well in excess of 80 million dollars, at a
24 minimum. And what do we have for it after 25
25 years? No energy policy. Right now the best they

1 can do through Congress is take oil out of the
2 ground, pipe it up to Richton and put it back in
3 the ground. That's brilliant.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MR. HARDY: The nuclear energy program for
6 electricity is 25 years behind the curve. Hell, if
7 -- with all due respect to the Estabrooks, and I
8 love you guys, I can go buy a Hummer tomorrow and
9 get eight miles to the gallon. Brilliant from the
10 Department of Energy.

11 We are looking at a government
12 bureaucracy. And you, good folks, I am sure you
13 are getting a paycheck and you're hoping that you
14 can get out of here alive and go get your
15 retirement. This is a debacle, folks. It is a
16 political boondoggle.

17 Let's look at the facts. The strategic
18 oil program at Richton, if it has 164 million
19 barrels of oil, will give us 57 days' supply. That
20 is about one-half of 20 percent of the imported oil
21 coming from abroad. Who benefits? The oil
22 companies don't have to put up six billion dollars
23 of infrastructure to store the crude oil. We get
24 the honor of paying for it. They get to draw it
25 down in a crisis. And then they are going to send

1 it down here to Chevron to refine it. And we get
2 to pay four or five dollars a gallon while their
3 profits go up 300 percent over the last 24 months.
4 Chevron made 27 billion dollars after tax, cash
5 profit. This is a paid, bought for, done deal, big
6 politics, big money, big lobbyist. Our Governor
7 should be arrested for malfeasance.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MR. HARDY: One last point. We have the
10 dubious honor in this county of having the highest
11 incidence of cancer and cancer death rate. We are
12 in the top ten percent of 1,371 counties in
13 America. Our industries locally have permits
14 through the DEQ with rubber stamped hearings. And
15 since 1994, through 2006, our local industries, by
16 permit, have discharged, and they have reported to
17 EPA, one billion five hundred and forty million
18 pounds of known carcinogens. It just so happens
19 that Jackson County has the highest incidence of
20 cancer in America. Mississippi is the second
21 highest state on America in the cancer incidence
22 rate. And we are 147 percent higher than
23 Mississippi.

24 It's not enough that government agencies
25 are killing off our citizens at the rate of one

1 person dying of cancer every day and a half in
2 Jackson County. And we only have 130,000 people
3 here. Every day and a half a person dies of
4 cancer. It may be coincidental. I don't think so.
5 I think it's tied to the carcinogens. In 2006,
6 there was four million six hundred thousand pounds,
7 39.7 pounds of carcinogens for every man, woman and
8 child. It's not enough to kill us off. Hell,
9 let's kill off the wildlife in the Pascagoula and
10 the Gulf of Mexico.

11 (APPLAUSE.)

12 MS. FALEY: After Dr. Mulkana will be
13 Sarah Barnes.

14 DR. MULKANA: My name is Saeed Mulkana. I
15 am an ecologist. I have my Ph.D. from Gulf Coast
16 Research Lab. I was the first one to do Ph.D. from
17 there. I have lived here for 43 years and I love
18 Mississippi. And I am going to live here for the
19 rest of my life. And I am concerned about this
20 project.

21 I need to remind you, you change the
22 environment if something happens. The amount of
23 oil that is going to be stored in the Richton Salt
24 Dome and the -- just think about if something
25 happens and -- God forsaken (sic), if something

1 were to happen. And my information is there would
2 be 150 billion gallons of oil being stored. And
3 that is a mind boggling figure. And just think
4 about that. What will happen if an accident
5 happens? And I hope it never happens that way.
6 The Mississippi beds will be destroyed. The Gulf
7 of Mexico will be damaged.

8 I am basically a planktologist. I am an
9 ecologist and planktologist. My belief is the
10 southern part of Mississippi is actually an area
11 for the young fish and shrimp, crustaceans. I have
12 solid work. I did my research here on plankton for
13 almost two years and I have publications here from
14 research.

15 Any time -- (inaudible), especially when
16 we were pumped with a great deal of brine. If you
17 see it like that, but in this -- in Texas, in
18 Laguna Padre (phonetic), there is a very big
19 lagoon. Water dumps from the Gulf of Mexico only
20 with the high tide. The factor there is
21 evaporation. The salinity there is fairly high.
22 What lives there in that lake? Nothing, except
23 brine shrimp. And that is what is going to happen
24 up here.

25 If we pump 50 million from the Pascagoula

1 River and the -- pumping into the Gulf and then the
2 brine is dumped out there, close to out there, it's
3 going to increase the salinity. Any time you
4 change the water, any factor, the whole ecosystem
5 changes.

6 We have here the anagomous species of fish
7 and crustaceans that go upstream to spawn or lay
8 eggs. And their numbers start coming down because
9 they are supposed to go into the shallows and --
10 area and feed there and grow up there. But if the
11 water has become very salty, what will happen, they
12 will all die.

13 Our shrimp population -- shrimp is very
14 important in the state of Mississippi. Mississippi
15 has already got the poorest state in the nation.
16 We don't want to do all these things. We don't
17 want to have poison --

18 (APPLAUSE.)

19 DR. MULKANA: The shrimp, the life is
20 about eight months. They go out in the offshore
21 area, but they go and they have to spawn, lay eggs.
22 These eggs will stop coming in, you know. And by
23 the time they reach here, early part of the thing
24 will be Spring, they have to be post-larvae. They
25 are about maybe half a centimeter long. They need

1 shallow water, warm and a lot of food there and --
2 which is there already. We have this area of -- we
3 have one of the best fertile areas in the world.
4 Dr. Gunter now, who is deserved to be the father of
5 the (inaudible), he said the area from Pascagoula
6 to Port Arthur in Texas, he said the fertile
7 crescent between them was the most fertile area in
8 the world now.

9 And the species of fish that grow up here,
10 the young come here and they live in this area.
11 And then they form these standing populations. And
12 year after year those fish populations is
13 maintained. What is going to happen if they leak
14 in water with the high salinity? The young will
15 go. And what will happen next year and the next
16 year and subsequent years? There will be no
17 Mississippi -- this area will become completely
18 stunted. And what is going to happen with this
19 poor state?

20 We cannot afford to do these things, take
21 off 50 million gallons of water every day. This is
22 one of the -- the very source for water we have.
23 And then the -- pump back the brine, highly
24 salinated water? No. Any time you change the
25 ecosystem there has to be something. We all stand

1 to lose a great deal if you allow this project to
2 go.

3 (APPLAUSE.)

4 DR. MULKANA: Thank you for allowing me to
5 say this.

6 (APPLAUSE.)

7 MS. FALEY: Sarah -- I believe it's
8 Barnes. It could be Baines. Sarah Barnes or
9 Baines?

10 (NO RESPONSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Ron Schnoor from Signal
12 International.

13 MR. SCHNOOR: Yes. My name is Ron
14 Schnoor. And that is S-C-H-N-O-O-R. I am the
15 senior vice president and general manager for
16 Signal International. And I am responsible for the
17 company's Mississippi operation.

18 Certainly there is clearly a long list of
19 environmental issues associated with this project.
20 And I'll start by saying I haven't been an
21 environmental advocate, but this particular project
22 has a lengthy list of things that I would object
23 to. But that is not really what my objection here
24 is tonight. It is specifically to do with jobs.

25 Our company is a very vital employer in

1 Jackson County. We are currently employing 2,200
2 people and we have lots of opportunity to grow our
3 business. We do service the offshore oil and gas
4 industry. And we are also serving the defense
5 industry with the construction of modules for
6 warships; both very vital interests to our
7 Country's interests.

8 That said, the DOE's consideration for
9 locating a tank farm and an offloading terminal
10 that would essentially take up forty percent of our
11 real estate, displace potentially thousands of jobs
12 that this county and community desperately need,
13 makes no sense whatsoever, specifically when it
14 would only generate potentially 40 jobs. But we
15 are strongly opposed to the location of the tank
16 farm facility and the potential devastation of a
17 very vital business in Jackson County.

18 Thank you.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Kay
21 Mihelich, M-I-H-E-L-I-C-H. And then after that
22 will be Don Abrams.

23 MS. MIHELICH: Good evening. My name is
24 Kay Mihelich, K-A-Y M-I-H-E-L-I-C-H, resident of
25 Harrison County, Gulfport, Mississippi.

1 In a 2004 Washington Times article by a
2 gentleman named Alan Reynolds of the Cato
3 Institute, he wrote an article entitled "Oil
4 Reserves and Politics". He points out that the
5 U.S. Strategic Oil Reserves were intended by
6 legislation not as a military petroleum reserve,
7 not as a reserve intended for our national
8 security, but rather as an economic reserve. In
9 other words, as I understand what he is saying in
10 this article, that when oil prices surge sell-offs
11 or even a hint of a sell-off could be made from the
12 Strategic Oil Reserves and these sell-offs could be
13 at lower prices than the current market price.
14 This type of sell-off would undermine, according to
15 him, the stability of oil speculators who have been
16 helping to increase the price of a barrel of oil.

17 He also states in this same article that
18 during the period of 2001 to 2004 that the
19 Strategic Oil Reserves have been increasing by a
20 160,000 barrels a day. I'm sorry. I don't have
21 the data for the subsequent time, 2004 to 2008, but
22 it would be my guess that it's about or -- if not
23 more than that amount. But the -- back in 2004,
24 you might recall, that the cost of a barrel of oil
25 was about 40 dollars a barrel. And if we are

1 continuing at 160,000 barrels of oil into the
2 Strategic Oil Reserves, 365 days a year, at our
3 current price I can tell you it doesn't take a DOE
4 employee to realize that that is a lot, a lot, of
5 money and that someone stands to make a lot of
6 money from the purchase of that oil.

7 And that then brings me to my point and my
8 question tonight. Who stands to cash in on the
9 decision, on the plan to establish the Richton Salt
10 Dome as the Strategic Oil Reserve? I believe that
11 we need to call upon the Freedom of Information Act
12 to let us know who stands to get rich by Richton.

13 The current administration, according to
14 the article, has taken the position during this
15 administration not to sell a drop of the Strategic
16 Oil Reserves, except in the event of a severe
17 disruption of supply. Well, perhaps that is why we
18 are seeing the rising cost of oil.

19 Rather than address environmental issues
20 first, I say let's bring backroom politics into the
21 light. Let them be exposed.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: Don Abrams is next. And then
24 after that, Eric Richards from the Gulf
25 Conservation Coalition.

1 MR. ABRAMS: My name is Don Abrams. I am
2 a Jackson County resident. It is A-B-R-A-M-S.

3 First of all, I want to make sure everyone
4 knows what we are talking about here with regard to
5 the volume of salt they want to dump in our
6 backyard here. I'd suggest you consider a
7 five-gallon bucket and about eleven pounds of salt;
8 six and three-quarters of these boxes. You'll know
9 when you have enough, when you can't dissolve any
10 more.

11 Now, I don't think anybody in this room
12 would let me dump that five-gallon bucket in their
13 yard. I intend to ask Governor Barbour if I can
14 drop it on the front of the capitol lawn.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MR. ABRAMS: Now, to envision what these
17 people want to do to us, imagine ten million of
18 these buckets every day, one from each of us in the
19 state of Mississippi, one from every citizen in the
20 state of Louisiana and one from most of the people
21 in Alabama, every day. If you line these things
22 up, they are about 12 inches across, they'd stretch
23 from here to the Pearl River and back, plus all the
24 way to the DOE office in Washington and back. It
25 is an astronomical amount of salt.

1 Now, the thing that you want us to feel
2 comfortable with is this environmental impact
3 statement and this hearing process. I told
4 Mr. Johnson the other day -- on Tuesday, I drove up
5 to Greene County -- that this, in the 35 years
6 since I got my mechanical engineering degree, this
7 is the worst piece of technical analysis I have
8 ever seen in my life.

9 (APPLAUSE.)

10 MR. ABRAMS: By your own contractor's
11 admission, it was rush work, without enough time,
12 that took crippling shortcuts. One of your
13 contractors gave me the example, if you notice, the
14 input data for all the brine models, at all five of
15 the new sites, is identical, except for the depth.
16 It's terrible. There are horrible errors. There
17 are substantial omissions. I am disgusted that my
18 tax dollars supported this sort of shoddy work.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MR. ABRAMS: Particularly when so many
21 thousands of my neighbors are still trying to
22 recover from the hurricane we had here.

23 (APPLAUSE.)

24 MR. ABRAMS: With the quality of the EIS
25 you have submitted and with your conduct this week,

1 you have lost my confidence. You have lost my
2 faith in you. And you have lost my trust. I could
3 cite examples of errors and omissions in this thing
4 as long as anyone wanted to stay here. I will get
5 you a written copy. And I am more than happy to
6 forward it to anyone else who would like it. See
7 me afterwards. It's going to be a substantial
8 list.

9 I want to hit two of my favorites here.
10 Earlier this week Mr. Johnson told the Sun Herald
11 that since 1990 there have been six brine leaks.
12 Six brine leaks, six leaks in this toxic brine
13 solution that they are going to be pumping all over
14 our state. A gentleman tonight said that there had
15 been four in the last ten years. And I double
16 checked that number with him. If I go to Page 3-5
17 of the environmental impact study and look at the
18 period from 1982 through 2003, there are 227 leaks.
19 The gentleman tonight said these are from the sites
20 all together. They are not. It says: Reportable
21 brine spills from the pipeline systems at existing
22 SPR sites. Pipeline leaks at existing sites, 227
23 of them.

24 In the EIS, on Page 3-12: Based on
25 historic spill statistics and measures that would

1 be in place to detect and stop brine spills when
2 they occur, these estimated brine spills most
3 likely would be of low volume, less than 50
4 barrels. That is 2,100 gallons. Higher volume
5 brine spills, while possible, are very unlikely,
6 based on SPR experience.

7 The SPR experience is 227 leaks since
8 1982. The largest involving 35 million gallons of
9 brine; the second largest, 25.5 million. Yet, in
10 the EIS, no environmental impacts were observed
11 from each of these spills. You have the wrong
12 people looking.

13 You have posters out there tonight that
14 say research from Texas A&M and McNeese State, that
15 says that the brine diffusers are safe and there is
16 no problem. Since I saw that on Tuesday, I've done
17 a little hustling. I've found some of the papers.
18 I intend to find the rest of them. I have talked
19 to one of those researchers and he howled when I
20 told him what you had concluded from his work.

21 So what I want to know is, were you
22 misleading us in the EIS or are you misleading us
23 now, this week?

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MR. ABRAMS: The final thing -- I know I

1 am out of time. The supplemental EIS is being done
2 by the same people, the same contractors and the
3 same department that when they drafted this thing
4 out put the diffuser in the ship channel. We have
5 got 39-foot-deep ships coming into 40 feet of
6 water, with a four-foot hose sticking up from the
7 bottom. You know, we have got some rocket
8 scientists on the coast, but there was no rocket
9 science involved here.

10 The same people are doing the supplemental
11 EIS and presumably those same people are going to
12 do the environmental study. And presumably they
13 are going to be involved in the mechanical and
14 electrical design of this project. I have no
15 confidence it is going to work and I am disgusted.

16 (APPLAUSE.)

17 MS. FALEY: Eric Richards and then Maxine
18 Ramsay.

19 MR. RICHARDS: My name is Eric Richards.
20 I represent the Gulf Conservation Coalition. I am
21 a lifelong resident of Pascagoula, back fifth
22 generation. My father is sitting in the audience
23 and there were three generations prior to him. We
24 know a little bit about Pascagoula.

25 First, I'd like to say that we do

1 appreciate the DOE coming down and hearing these
2 comments. I think it is a very important step. We
3 are looking very much forward to the additional
4 steps of hopefully making some strong changes in
5 these current plans.

6 Some hard speakers to follow. Some
7 extremely good points have already been made
8 tonight. So I am going to try to breeze through a
9 few items that I had.

10 The Gulf Conservation Coalition has four
11 very strong concerns about the current plans. The
12 50 million gallons of fresh water per day out of
13 the Pascagoula River system, an extremely bad idea
14 from our standpoint, in a river that is already
15 stressed very much to the max. It is one of the
16 more pristine river systems in the country. It
17 doesn't need to be stressed anymore. Huge
18 potential impacts that.

19 Now, as I list the concerns I would also
20 like to offer some alternatives, solutions.
21 Instead of the Pascagoula River, I heard
22 Congressman Taylor is favoring pulling it from the
23 Gulf of Mexico. I would like to suggest that the
24 water be pulled from the Mississippi River. A lot
25 of people say that that is quite a distance from

1 Richton to the Mississippi River. It is not that
2 much further if you consider that the pipeline
3 already planned in this proposal, running from
4 Richton to Liberty, Mississippi, will not be used
5 until after the dome is filled with petroleum. It
6 is used for distribution, in with the cap from the
7 pipeline.

8 My proposal is that you make that line a
9 little bit larger, large enough to handle the raw
10 water intake, only add about 50 miles of pipeline
11 over to the Mississippi River. You can eliminate
12 the 30-mile line down to Merrill.

13 The Mississippi River flows, according to
14 the U.S. Geodetic Survey, 600 times the average
15 annual flow rate at that point in the river than
16 the Pascagoula River does at Merrill. The
17 Mississippi River would never notice that it lost a
18 drop of water by doing that.

19 The second concern, you have heard a lot
20 tonight about the brine disposal; an extremely
21 large concern. I heard several from the scientific
22 community talk about what could happen with putting
23 out that volume. Don Abrams talked about the
24 amount of salt in terms of gallons of that highly
25 saline brine. It is 90 billion gallons, 90 billion

1 gallons.

2 Look right next door to us. Twenty-five
3 miles from where that disposal site is, Mobile Bay
4 has just lost its -- virtually all of its oyster
5 populations because of a natural increase in
6 salinity over there. A change in the salinity
7 changed the ecology, wiped out the oysters. We are
8 talking about accelerating that process here
9 because of the saline going down.

10 Brine spill potential, I am not going to
11 touch on that. Don Abrams did a good job of
12 pointing out that the average spill at the existing
13 sites was 282,000 gallons per spill.

14 There is a solution that will take care of
15 both of those. Deep well injection. Getting rid
16 of the brine by deep well injection. It was done
17 at two of the four sites. It is proposed for the
18 Bruinsburg site. That is one of the other options.
19 It was originally proposed for Richton in 1992, but
20 was taken off the table this time around. It
21 eliminates virtually all the environmental issues,
22 saves many miles of pipelines, and also the spill
23 clean-up costs and restitution to the property
24 owners.

25 The fourth concern, Ron Schnoor touched on

1 the fact that the tank farm and anywhere --
2 anywhere in the Pascagoula area on the waterfront
3 will take jobs away from this county.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MR. RICHARDS: Fifty acres will support
6 anywhere from 500 to 1,000 jobs. We are going to
7 give it up for 10 to 40 jobs, depending on which
8 number you look at.

9 Move it inland. There is a solution.
10 Move that tank farm inland. Put it in the woods,
11 where you don't have to protect it from hurricanes.
12 The cost of the property is going to be extremely
13 less than waterfront.

14 Let me make one last point, please. Think
15 about this project from a different perspective.
16 What if there were a salt dome about 60 miles west
17 of Washington, D.C., Alexandria, Virginia, and you
18 needed fresh water and there is the Potomac River.
19 You pull the water from the Potomac. You take the
20 brine and you dispose of it in the Chesapeake Bay.
21 Would anybody even consider doing that? Okay. All
22 I am asking is, give Mississippi the same
23 consideration that the people of Virginia would
24 give to the same project.

25 (APPLAUSE.)

1 MR. RICHARDS: And I will conclude by
2 saying, look, if the project has got to happen, do
3 it right. There are solutions. There are ways of
4 doing it. Let everybody walk away at the end of
5 this project, whatever the outcome is, being proud
6 of what they accomplished here. And whatever is
7 done, do it right.

8 Thank you.

9 (APPLAUSE.)

10 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Maxine
11 Ramsay. And the speaker after that will be Doug
12 Adams.

13 MS. RAMSAY: My name is Maxine Ramsay,
14 It's R-A-M-S-A-Y.

15 My objections to the Richton Salt Dome
16 project, when it was first discussed, the project
17 was going to have a deep well injection to dispose
18 of the salt brine slurry. I realize that this
19 would probably cost more. But environmentally,
20 wouldn't this be more economical, in the long run,
21 when you are looking at the overall picture that
22 will result in detrimental effects to the
23 Pascagoula as a whole, to the fishing, to the
24 seafood and to the tourist industry?

25 Since it appears that Governor Barbour,

1 Senator Cochran and Wicker are so gung-ho to
2 destroy South Mississippi, will you publish all the
3 names of all of our senators and representatives
4 who are buying into this money-making project for a
5 select few? They are destroying the environment in
6 South Mississippi, including the Pascagoula and all
7 it encompasses.

8 Why should you even consider the Richton
9 Salt Dome project when there is ample room to store
10 it all in neighboring states' salt domes? And even
11 the amount of oil proposed stored in the Richton
12 Salt Dome will only last a matter of weeks and,
13 most likely, days.

14 According to DOE people here, it will only
15 last up to two weeks. What a waste of taxpayers'
16 dollars in the amount of an area of 4 billion
17 dollars. And before it will be over, it will
18 probably be 8 billion dollars.

19 Will you take responsibility if the
20 Mississippi Gulf Coast encounters a severe drought,
21 such as Georgia is experiencing at present --

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. RAMSAY: -- if the Pascagoula is not
24 able to supply water and give them their contracted
25 water at the present time? You need to take into

1 consideration that the Pascagoula is supplying -- I
2 think Chevron is taking quite a bit. And they are
3 expecting to expand. You need to do your homework.

4 In essence, you claim in your report the
5 minute salinity brine will not affect any aspect of
6 the environment. Therefore, will you take the
7 blame for the detrimental effects the high salinity
8 will have on the seafood, fishing and tourist
9 industry? Or will you push the blame off on a
10 low-level employee, which usually happens?

11 I do not believe any of your reports on
12 the few and minimal salt spills reported by DOE.
13 Thus, knowing the salt spills will occur, and more
14 than you claim, who will pay the landowners
15 affected for damages to their crops, to the
16 livestock and so forth because you didn't do all
17 your research? Will you publish the names of all
18 those who will benefit from your pipeline,
19 including the land owners and the mineral rights
20 owners?

21 Have you considered other areas to run the
22 pipeline, such as the Mississippi or the Yazoo? Or
23 would that not happen because of the old adage, not
24 in my backyard, from the politicians and the
25 powers-that-be who are supporting this debacle

1 would be true?

2 Again, I am completely against this
3 project as written. And there are many more
4 reasons of why not that should be considered, other
5 than those stated today, that should be addressed
6 with common sense, S-E-N-S-E, instead of dollars
7 and cents, C-E-N-T-S, like the politicians and the
8 powers-that-be are proposing.

9 Thank you.

10 (APPLAUSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Next is Doug Adams. Following
12 Doug will be Cynthia Ramseur.

13 MR. ADAMS: My name is Doug Adams. I live
14 on the Pascagoula River, about three-quarters of a
15 mile south of the pumping station at Cumbest Bluff.

16 Chevron is already pumping roughly 30
17 million gallons of water a day. Of the 40 jobs that
18 y'all talk about, I am sure Mr. Ryan can probably
19 put them guys to work down there somewhere.

20 (LAUGHTER.)

21 MR. ADAMS: But that is not going to help
22 the shrimpers and the crabbers and the oyster
23 people and all that, that kind of stuff.

24 Mr. Johnson, in the middle of July and
25 August, when the water is at its normal level, not

1 flooded, you can walk from our yard straight to the
2 center of the Pascagoula River right now because
3 the water level is so low.

4 Two months ago this flounder -- we ended
5 up with a flounder on our sandbar. We are 20 miles
6 from the mouth of the River. So you can't tell us
7 the salt water is not going to come up if you pull
8 this out. People keep saying 50 million gallons of
9 water a day. That is over five years. We are
10 talking about billions of gallons of water. Not 50
11 million; billions of gallons of water that is going
12 to be taken out, along with the 30 million that
13 Chevron already takes out.

14 Oil -- you can't pump oil in Alaska
15 because of the environment. Today, on the
16 Internet, North Dakota, it's got 400 billion
17 barrels of oil in North Dakota that they are not
18 pumping. But, yet, we are going to put 160 million
19 barrels of oil in Pascagoula, or Richton, for 16,
20 18 days? We have heard several different figures
21 about that.

22 Another thing that Eric said, you can bet
23 that if this was in the Northeast, Ted Kennedy,
24 John Kerry, Chris Dodd, this wouldn't never happen.
25 Our representatives have let us down. I am not a

1 Democrat. Believe me, I support all these
2 Republican guys. But they have totally let us down
3 on this, totally.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MR. ADAMS: This will have a far, far
6 worse impact economically and environmentally than
7 what this 160 million barrels of oil is going to do
8 for us for 14, 16, however many days y'all say it's
9 going to last, especially when we have got oil in
10 Alaska you can't drill because of environmental.
11 North Dakota, you can pull it up on the Internet.
12 It's going to be announced some time next week. It
13 was announced on the radio yesterday, 400 million
14 barrels of oil in North Dakota that we are not even
15 touching yet. There is a lot of other things we
16 can do besides this. Y'all are going to kill us on
17 the Pascagoula River.

18 Any time you would like to tour the river,
19 you or some of these decision makers, call me up
20 and I'll take you from the mouth of the river as
21 far as you want to go. And I am sure there is a
22 bunch of other people that would be glad to go with
23 us.

24 Thank you.

25 (APPLAUSE.)

1 MS. FALEY: The next speaker will be Della
2 McCaughan after Cynthia Ramseur.

3 MS. RAMSEUR: Cynthia Ramseur,
4 R-A-M-S-E-U-R, citizen of Jackson County.

5 I submitted written comments, so I won't
6 discuss those. You have those. But there are a
7 couple of things that came to my attention and I
8 just want to comment on in addition to that.

9 When you started the meeting tonight you
10 said the purpose of the scoping meeting is to
11 determine how best to conduct the EIS. And if you
12 haven't already gotten that message from some of
13 the other comments, it must be done more carefully,
14 thoroughly, with more factuality than the first one
15 was done. And I would also agree with Senator
16 Dawkins and others, we have a lot of really fine
17 scientists who have spent years studying on this
18 river and in the Mississippi Sound. And I know
19 that many of them were not involved in this
20 process. In fact, the person who is in charge of
21 the Corps of Engineers planning for the state of
22 Mississippi didn't know anything about this
23 project. The people who know these systems, who
24 know the problems, were not consulted. That is not
25 acceptable.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. RAMSEUR: Several instances in the
3 other room, of going around the stations, people
4 asked questions and the response of the DOE
5 representatives was, well, we'll have to do more
6 detailed studies. I am thinking that that is the
7 EIS. And they didn't do them in the first one and
8 I really don't have a lot of confidence that that
9 is going to happen in the second one. I'm very
10 concerned.

11 And then, finally, one thing that has not
12 been addressed and I'll just bring this up. And
13 I'd ask you to add this to the economic
14 considerations of the study. The original EIS does
15 not provide an adequate cost-benefit analysis for
16 the Richton Salt Dome project. Specifically, it
17 does not address the economic cost for mitigating
18 pipeline failures that run through critical wetland
19 habitats. I've been in the business of mitigation
20 for wetlands and streams for the last ten years and
21 that is not addressed in here. It's a very real
22 cost. The EIS estimates 56 failures, which could
23 be hundreds of thousands of acres of damage over a
24 period of time.

25 One cannot weigh the public benefit of

1 jobs gained and other economic benefits without
2 weighing the full cost of mitigation from pipeline
3 construction and pipeline failure. What is the
4 cost? Who will be responsible for emergency
5 stabilization, restoration, remediation design and
6 implementation? Who will monitor and who will
7 assure success of the mitigation?

8 Thank you.

9 (APPLAUSE.)

10 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Della
11 McCaughan, followed by Robert Smith.

12 MS. MCCAUGHAN: My name is Della
13 McCaughan, spelled M-C-C-A-U-G-H-A-N. I am a
14 resident of Biloxi, Mississippi. I am no one
15 important. I am just an old, retired
16 schoolteacher, 80 years old today.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MS. MCCAUGHAN: And so instead of being
19 out jitterbugging with my husband, by gosh, I
20 thought this was more important.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. MCCAUGHAN: You know, one time I went
23 to -- by the way, there is no use holding up that
24 colored sheet of paper because I can't see it
25 anyway.

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MS. MCCAUGHAN: You know, the smartest

1 people in the state of Mississippi, they are the
2 fishermen. Do you know that they are going to pump
3 the salt water about six miles, I think, from Horn
4 Island? Well, if you come in right at the south of
5 Horn Island, they have beautiful, beautiful,
6 gorgeous *Donax variabilis*. And my nephew said
7 don't use those terms. Well, I've got to let
8 people know from outside us, hell, we have some
9 sense. But anyway, *Donax variabilis* are the
10 beautiful little gorgeous clams. And just right to
11 the south of Horn Island you can find those by the
12 millions.

13 So I brought some in. And I've always
14 experimented with the things. And so I put them in
15 some salt water from Horn Island and I put one
16 little drop of food coloring. And I guess that was
17 probably about one drop to a thousand drops of
18 water. Something like that. Do you know
19 immediately, when that little clam took in that
20 little water with just that blue food coloring in,
21 man, it shot that water out in an instant. So, you
22 see, these animals are sensitive to any type of
23 things in that water. And they would probably do
24 the same thing with salinity differences.

25 Now, I ask, when that comes out of that

1 pipe, that salt water, that brine, my God, 300
2 parts per thousand. Do you know what normally is
3 out there in the Gulf of Mexico? 29, 32, 33, 36.
4 300 parts? Now, I said, Well, how far -- how much
5 of an area does it cover? And so, It depends on
6 conditions. If you are a scientist you don't want
7 to hear it depends. You want to know facts. Okay?

8 So anyway, they said, Well, we test mices
9 shrimp and the silverside minnow. Two species, one
10 a crustacean, one a fish. Hello. You are really
11 testing for pollution. I would advise
12 phytoplankton. What is that? The little plankton
13 like the nice fellow up here was talking about
14 today. That is a stupid thing, you take two little
15 species. And they all have varying degrees of
16 salinity. Two species? Huh-uh. That is not the
17 way to do it, folks.

18 And then I said, Well, what is the
19 temperature? Well, it's about 100 degrees coming
20 out. Hello. 100 degrees would kill a lot of the
21 phytoplankton and the little plankton that's out
22 there. And you have millions and billions in
23 really small areas. Okay, folks, no people from
24 the Research Lab. No people out there are
25 scientists.

1 I want to tell you something else. And
2 you all know this. The islands have been moving
3 for years. I have maps that show that. I have
4 appeared before a Congressional hearing in
5 Washington, D.C. And I said, I am here to teach
6 you what every fisherman knows. And they listened.
7 And I had charts put up there on that Senate and
8 they were aghast at that. I said, No, I have to
9 have that.

10 So anyway, our islands are moving. And at
11 one time the island would move from east, you know,
12 the sand, over to the west and build up and just
13 travel. But now they are pumping it out, shipping
14 it way out. And we are going to be losing the size
15 of the islands. So anyway, when they are pumping
16 stuff out -- that gentleman that got up here
17 tonight, my God, he was brilliant. That scientist.
18 You ought to be getting his autograph tonight.
19 That is the kind of people that should have been on
20 that committee, making all these darn decisions.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. MCCAUGHAN: Ms. Dawkins, I met her
23 tonight. But I'll tell you one thing, next time
24 she runs for anything, I am going to go work my
25 tail off for her. What a brave woman Ms. Dawkins

1 is. God. And I bet you there is not too many of
2 our candidates around here. But she appeared and
3 she gave a speech that was good.

4 I had all these pages and really didn't
5 have time to write a lot of information. But I
6 will tell you, public opinion is a compelling
7 force. And unless you do something -- I am too old
8 to really fight and fuss and do things, but you are
9 young enough to do it. So I would say to you, get
10 you some buses. Get you some cars. Go up there to
11 that Senate and sit right there and worry the hell
12 out of them. And let them know --

13 (APPLAUSE.)

14 MS. MCCAUGHAN: And let them know that we
15 are having decisions that still will say I didn't
16 know anybody from Mississippi was that smart. The
17 brain power I heard here tonight, I don't have to
18 go all -- I had so many points here tonight -- look
19 at this folks (indicating). But I'll tell you one
20 thing, the brain power that has stepped up here
21 tonight, my God, Mississippi is one of the most
22 intelligent states in the nation. We don't have a
23 lot of money. We don't have a large population.
24 Poor things, we have only got six electoral votes.
25 That's why I think they picked on us. They don't

1 go to New York. They don't go to California. They
2 don't go to those areas where those electoral votes
3 are big. So political -- stand your ground,
4 Mississippians.

5 And I am proud to be 80 tonight and to be
6 here and to listen to you wonderful, wonderful
7 people. Thank you.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MS. FALEY: The next speaker is Robert
10 Smith, followed by Spencer Garrell (phonetic). I
11 want to remind people that we still have probably
12 20 people registered to speak. And I'd like to be
13 able to open it up to anybody else who wasn't able
14 to sign up on the registry. So if we can keep our
15 comments short, that gives everybody an
16 opportunity.

17 Is there a Robert Smith who signed up?

18 (NO RESPONSE.)

19 MS. FALEY: Very well. Spencer Garrell.
20 Then the next speaker will be John Maggard.

21 MR. GARRETT: I thank you very kindly. My
22 name is actually Spencer Garrett, S-P-E-N-C-E-R
23 G-A-R-R-E-T-T.

24 Professionally, I direct the National
25 Seafood Inspection Laboratory for the National

1 Marine Fishery Service, which is under NOAA, the
2 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

3 (SEVERAL PEOPLE CALL OUT THAT
4 THEY CANNOT HEAR THE SPEAKER.)

5 MR. GARRETT: That's really terrible because I
6 used to be a bosun mate in the Coast Guard and I
7 could really belt it out. Now, I'm an old folk.

8 But I've been a life -- not a lifelong
9 resident, but I've been along the Mississippi Gulf
10 Coast for the last 56 years and a resident of
11 Gautier for the last 35 years. I've been a shrimp
12 boat captain and all that kind of stuff. I am a
13 microbiologist and one of those scientists that the
14 lady talks about. I don't know. I am certainly
15 not as brilliant as those folks are. But I want to
16 make several points tonight.

17 One, everything that has been said has
18 been said. I do think, though, that we should all
19 understand that while perception may not be
20 reality, perception always controls reality. And I
21 think that we all should take great heart tonight
22 in terms of the perceptions and what we can
23 control.

24 I would like to associate my remarks with
25 Eric and others, and certainly Congressman Taylor,

1 that if this thing, you know, has to go through it
2 obviously has to be changed. I would caution
3 trying to pull water from the Mississippi River.
4 You have to be careful what you wish for. Because
5 that, in fact, is the colon of America and it's
6 contaminated as hell. So I am not too certain we
7 want to take that.

8 But secondly, certainly there could be
9 other -- thirdly, there could be other avenues,
10 such as taking the water from the Gulf of Mexico
11 itself. Obviously something has to change.

12 I am quite familiar with the process, the
13 necessary -- the need to have good and accurate and
14 substantial EIS statements. And you have just a
15 wealth of scientific expertise along the
16 Mississippi Gulf Coast. And certainly I would
17 recommend that you use that expertise, whether it's
18 the Gulf Coast Research Lab or our universities or
19 Stennis Space Center or what have you. And these
20 people would be most helpful. And go to the field
21 and go to the people that live here to truly find
22 out, you know, what is possibly doable and what is
23 not doable.

24 But another alternative might be -- and
25 this is -- you know, don't kick me out of here.

1 This is -- nobody has ever thought of it or they
2 haven't thought of it in years. I haven't -- in
3 these public hearings. I want to remind you that
4 the German Army under Hitler had fuel for his
5 Panzer divisions, his tanks, for four years from
6 coal deacidification. That's another alternative
7 that if we want to try to separate ourselves -- we
8 have coal for like, what, 100,000 years? And the
9 formula theoretically has been lost and it is a
10 high-pressure technique and it is very labor
11 intensive. And the last time I checked an
12 economist said, well, goodness, gasoline would have
13 to be selling for two dollars a gallon.

14 (LAUGHTER.)

15 MR. GARRETT: So there you are. But in
16 closing, I wish you all well. I understand this is
17 difficult for you on that side of the table
18 (indicating). I have been there, by the way. But
19 listen to the citizens here. We -- it's
20 unfortunate -- we are all Katrina victims. We
21 didn't have a chance -- I had six feet of water in
22 my house, just like everybody did in their house.
23 And we didn't really have time to come to a hearing
24 back in those days. But this certainly has to be
25 rethought. And if it has to go down, then it has

1 to go down in a manner that is acceptable to all of
2 us.

3 Thank you very kindly.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MS. FALEY: John Maggard. And then B.G.
6 Thompson from the Organized Seafood Association.

7 MR. MAGGARD: I am John Maggard,
8 M-A-G-G-A-R-D. I am also a voting citizen of
9 Jackson County.

10 Now, I do not have any prepared facts and
11 figures, but I do want it on record that I am
12 against this proposal. I had people tell me today
13 what they did in Texas and what they've done in
14 Louisiana. And I am here to tell you I couldn't
15 care less what they did in Texas or Louisiana. I
16 don't know of anybody here that could care less
17 what they did.

18 That's my feeling on it. Thank you.

19 (APPLAUSE.)

20 MS. FALEY: B.G. Thompson from the
21 Organized Seafood Association and then Jeff Grimes
22 from the Gulf Restoration Network.

23 MR. THOMPSON: That is B, as in boy, G as
24 in girl, T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N.

25 The Organized Seafood Association of

1 Alabama is located in Bayou La Batre, just a few
2 miles down the road. It represents the fishing
3 industry, both the fishermen and the processors and
4 the people who support that industry.

5 We have several concerns, a lot of which
6 have already been covered here tonight. One of the
7 things, like the -- talking about the estuaries, I
8 would like to add that over 90 percent of the
9 marine resources at some stage in their life depend
10 on the estuaries. And anything that you may do
11 that would damage only a portion of those estuaries
12 is going to have an impact on the marine fisheries.

13 And the human population has increased so
14 much in the last 50 years that this resource is
15 being stretched to its limits. Okay? So we don't
16 need to cause harm by something when it is not
17 necessary, which leads me to my next point.

18 We are in a situation today where our
19 economy is looking very, very weak because of the
20 high cost of oil. Our seafood industry, our
21 farmers are really in a hard bind right now, as to
22 whether or not they can continue to work in those
23 industries. And those are our food suppliers.

24 And I am not -- I am very disappointed
25 that -- I know this is an environmental issue that

1 we are addressing here tonight, but I have not
2 heard anything since this has been going on for
3 pretty well a long time now, that the Department of
4 Energy is not taking some steps to make sure that
5 we do not keep escalating in this manner that we
6 are doing right now, which could put a lot of
7 people out of jobs. And I think that is something
8 to take back to Washington.

9 Thank you.

10 (APPLAUSE.)

11 MS. FALEY: Jeff Grimes and then Avery
12 Bates from the Organized Seafood Association.

13 MR. GRIMES: Hi. My name is Jeff Grimes
14 and I am with the Gulf Restoration Network.

15 Before I start tonight I just want to
16 point out, I've been to a lot of these different
17 public hearings throughout Mississippi and I have
18 never been to a public hearing with this many folks
19 in attendance and this many people opposed to
20 something like this.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MR. GRIMES: And I hope that everyone here
23 from the Department of Energy tonight realizes how
24 deeply and profoundly people are concerned with
25 this project.

1 The Gulf Restoration Network is a Gulfwide
2 conservation and advocacy organization, with
3 members and member organizations in all five Gulf
4 coastal states. We work to protect coastal water
5 quality, fish habitats, coastal wetlands and
6 estuaries, rivers, fresh water wetlands, cypress
7 forests and habitats for threatened or endangered
8 species. We have deep and profound concerns about
9 the potential environmental impacts that could and
10 would result from the Richton Salt Dome project
11 moving forward as it is currently planned.

12 We are concerned that the Department of
13 Energy has not conducted the proper scientific
14 analysis that should accompany any project of this
15 magnitude. Instead we have seen statements in the
16 press that I read just the other day that this is
17 an environmentally friendly project and that there
18 would be no damage to sea creatures.

19 Unfortunately, I don't think that these statements
20 even hold up to the most basic level of scrutiny.
21 I want to ask how a project where the DOE predicts
22 56 spills of brine that could potentially kill
23 local rivers and streams, how is that
24 environmentally friendly?

25 The same lack of rigorous scientific

1 analysis can be found throughout the EIS that the
2 DOE completed. For example, the claim that the
3 brine would dissipate quickly in the Gulf of Mexico
4 was based upon a very simplistic model that failed
5 to consider even the most basic factors, such as
6 the tides, winds, bottom contours and the complex
7 currents that people tonight have described. We
8 would like to see a much more thorough analysis,
9 including the use of a three-dimensional model,
10 that takes into account all of the aforementioned
11 factors.

12 Another major shortcoming can be seen in
13 the analysis of the proposed water withdrawal. It
14 is impossible to say that a water withdrawal will
15 not have an impact on the Pascagoula River without
16 first knowing how much water you need to have in
17 the river to maintain current fish and wildlife
18 habitats. To date, no study has been done on the
19 instream flow for either the Pascagoula or the Leaf
20 River, the previous preferred location. So I want
21 to ask you, how does the DOE know that it is not
22 harming life in the Pascagoula River, the fish and
23 the wildlife, the Gulf sturgeon, the yellow box
24 mask turtle, the pearl darter? How can it make
25 those statements? I have no idea. I think the DOE

1 must conduct an instream flow incremental
2 methodology study, which is the type of study that
3 is necessary for this type of project.

4 In addition, DOE must answer the question
5 of what would happen during a period of extended
6 drought, like we have already witnessed in other
7 parts of the South. Who would have the first right
8 to withdraw the water? Would it be DOE, industry
9 in Jackson County or communities that use the
10 river?

11 These are just a few examples of the many
12 questions that remain. Unfortunately, we don't
13 have enough time tonight to raise all these issues,
14 so we will be submitting a thorough set of comments
15 later during the comment period.

16 Thank you.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MS. FALEY: Avery Bates and then Terry
19 Saucier.

20 MR. BATES: My name is Avery Bates,
21 A-V-E-R-Y B-A-T-E-S. I am vice president of the
22 Organized Seafood Association of Alabama.

23 We have grave concerns about this project.
24 Just a little salt goes a long way to destroying
25 crucial habitats. Our oyster reefs in Alabama have

1 been destroyed by a little bit more salt. When you
2 see total devastation of reefs -- where we used to
3 produce hundreds and thousands of sacks of oysters,
4 we are reduced from at least 300 working oystermen
5 down to 10 from just a little more salt.

6 You say what does a little more salt bring
7 in? It brings in the predators, like oyster
8 drills. They multiply by the millions. They eat
9 up oysters by the thousands of acres. I am an
10 oysterman too. I have witnessed it.

11 You are getting ready to turn loose
12 millions of gallons of salt water that is going to
13 turn around and come right back up into crucial
14 habitats for not only oysters, but crabs, shrimp,
15 fish. And when you see reefs destroyed --

16 I helped remove oysters to plant back in
17 other parts of Mississippi Sound. If you have an
18 area with this increasing weight of this heavy salt
19 water moving into these estuaries, killing these
20 reefs -- the phylo maps (phonetic) that these reefs
21 produce is through speckled trout, redfish, drum,
22 sheephead. When you can't feed these fish from
23 these reefs you are going to have depleted fish
24 stocks.

25 The seafood industry produces millions of

1 pounds not only for people in Mississippi, but the
2 people across this nation. You know, the
3 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act, the Congressmen voted
4 to say that it is a vital part, a good part. It
5 helps this nation to produce seafood from our
6 waters. If you allow this to happen you'll see the
7 devastation that has took place in the state of
8 Alabama by a little more salt water intruding into
9 your estuaries. You are going to be losing jobs.
10 A lot of our people had to leave the state. They
11 have come to Mississippi.

12 You had the devastation of Katrina. We
13 are building it back down here. Y'all are building
14 it back. Don't let this cause further problems in
15 the state of Mississippi. Katrina wiped us out
16 too. We have got a bigger cut in Dauphin Island.
17 This is where the extra salty water is coming in
18 down there. But here you are going to do something
19 that man can control and stop. Don't let this
20 happen in the state of Mississippi. Don't let this
21 happen to the food producing people like me.
22 Hundreds and thousands of people along the Gulf
23 Coast will be impacted.

24 We like our jobs. I am the fifth
25 generation of commercial fishermen. I know some

1 people would roll over in their graves. Blackie
2 Tillman. When I used to shrimp right out here in
3 the Pascagoula River, I worked right by some of the
4 other fishermen. And I know Mr. Frank Dailey would
5 roll over in his grave if he heard something like
6 this. He used to really draw a strict line on good
7 conservation of the marine resources in this state.
8 He wanted to see them prosper. He is dead and gone
9 now. We need more Frank Daileys to stand up from
10 the Conservation Department in this state. I know
11 the Conservation Department wants these resources
12 to flourish. Don't let this happen in the state of
13 Mississippi.

14 I appreciate some of the knowledge that
15 was imputed to the rest of the people. It is
16 something that is precious to this state, the
17 seafood. It is precious to this nation. The Gulf
18 States Marine Compact, if you read this, Article I
19 -- Article IV, you are not to allow the depletion
20 or physical waste of our marine life. Don't let it
21 happen in this state. Don't let it happen.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: Next is Terry -- I think it's
24 Saucier. And then --

25 MR. SAUCIER: Saucier, S-A-U-C-I-E-R.

1 MS. FALEY: And then following will be
2 Laura Bowie.

3 MR. SAUCIER: I have a short statement. I
4 am a lifelong resident of Pascagoula. My family
5 roots go back some 250 years. They were all
6 hunters and gatherers and fishermen. And myself, I
7 am in the marine industry. I've been 30 years as a
8 marine engineer.

9 I'd like to read my statement, so I'll be
10 quick. I am opposed to the project for numerous
11 reasons. I find it amazing that the more I hear
12 and discover about the project the more cause and
13 effect problems come to light.

14 The first, most obvious issue, is
15 degradation to the environment and the corridor
16 from the storage area along the pipeline path to
17 its terminus in the adjacent Mississippi coastal
18 waters. No one can accurately determine the damage
19 that will be done during the process of building
20 and the operation of the project. This is a big
21 unknown.

22 It's safe to say that the supersaturated
23 saline water, which is 15 to 20 times the average
24 salinity of the Mississippi coastal waters, will no
25 doubt have a negative effect on the marine

1 environment in the areas of the saline discharge.
2 But what happens when a leak or a major pipeline
3 rupture exists? How quickly can this oil be
4 secured? Is there adequate automatic closure
5 valves in place that will restrict the loss of
6 fluids before the spill is allowed to inundate a
7 large area and destroy much of the plant and
8 microbes that exist there?

9 For those who are interested in numbers,
10 50 million gallons a day equal 579 gallons per
11 second or 77.4 cubic feet per second flow rate
12 for five years. That is a lot of water. And a
13 major rupture in a pipe, can you imagine what the
14 potential damage to the Pascagoula River system
15 watershed would be?

16 We on the coast know all too well what the
17 effects of salt water on our river and property
18 are. I can't imagine what the effect of a spill
19 would be that is 10 times more saline than the
20 flood waters of Hurricane Katrina.

21 Has a cost-benefit analysis been completed
22 that actually models all possible scenarios,
23 including lawsuits from adjacent property owners
24 when damage from construction and accidents occur,
25 reparations to the environment, loss of land use,

1 competition for use of water -- municipalities and
2 industries, such as Chevron, depend heavily on the
3 fresh water from the Pascagoula River -- the loss
4 of marine life that supports sport, recreational
5 and commercial fishing industries and tourism along
6 the Gulf Coast? What about the overall cost of the
7 project? Five billion is the estimate. But like
8 most government programs, this number will surely
9 grow. It could easily double by the time the
10 construction is complete. And these are only a few
11 of the issues that should be considered in the
12 cost-benefit analysis.

13 My last point is, if the SPR has to be
14 done, why not use the salt dome situated some 65
15 miles south of the Mississippi coast? It is
16 located in -- some 5,000 feet under the ground and
17 approximately 200 feet of water depth. This is a
18 geologic structure, which selected, it could cause
19 -- surely prevent much less in many ways.
20 Pipelines that carry oil and gas from existing oil
21 production facilities already exist. No fresh
22 water from the Pascagoula River would be used. Sea
23 water could be used instead. And because of the
24 depth and the existing flow of the Gulf Stream, the
25 saline water being discharged would be much easier

1 diluted and dispersed than the plan that discharged
2 the water in the shallow waters of the coast. A
3 rig structure similar to the ones that exist in the
4 Gulf oil and gas operations could be erected and
5 utilized very effectively to move and store the
6 crude when needed.

7 In closing, it would be prudent for DOE to
8 spend the taxpayers' money on seeking alternative
9 fuel sources rather than spending the money to buy
10 more of the stuff that keeps the country and the
11 world held hostage. Rat-holing crude oil is not
12 the answer. We need a better way. And we've seen
13 those. Go out and be in front, trying to find it;
14 not continuing down the dead-end path.

15 Thank you.

16 (APPLAUSE.)

17 MS. FALEY: Laura Bowie and then Jerry
18 Stevenson.

19 MS. BOWIE: My name is Laura Bowie and I
20 am a resident of Jackson County. That is
21 B-O-W-I-E.

22 I just had a couple of comments on the
23 NEBA process that has been used so far. And I
24 wanted to say that I am just astonished that a
25 Record of Decision, which is equal to a Court's

1 judgment, has been issued based on the existing
2 EIS. It was very poorly written. And the public
3 process was pitiful. And I can't believe that a
4 Record of Decision, or a ROD, has been issued on
5 that.

6 With that being said, I would like to know
7 that the existing ROD has been voided in the courts
8 and that a new ROD will be issued after the revised
9 EIS. I believe this should be a revised EIS and
10 not a supplemental EIS because the proposed plan
11 has changed tremendously.

12 (APPLAUSE.)

13 MS. FALEY: Jerry Stevenson and then Joan
14 Belote.

15 MR. STEVENSON: I am Jerry Stevenson from
16 Vancleave, Mississippi, John's Bayou, Marina Road.
17 And I am on this river several days a week sport
18 fishing and playing around.

19 I am opposed to this salt dome project
20 because of the environmental impact. And removing
21 water from the river or the Gulf, you are going to
22 impact the Pascagoula River. The people that made
23 these decisions apparently have not been on this
24 river, up in the bayous. You are going to destroy
25 vegetation. You are going to destroy wildlife,

1 fish, marine life all the way down from Florida to
2 Texas.

3 The water does not move fast enough to get
4 rid of this salt, in any way, shape, form or
5 fashion. We have tides in Alaska that move 25 to
6 35 feet every tide change. We have got three feet
7 here for a big tide. Your Gulf is very shallow.
8 You can't move that much salt and dump it in there
9 and expect it not to have an impact.

10 I fish for fun and sport. I am not a
11 commercial fisherman, but I enjoy it. To watch you
12 destroy these oak trees that are hundreds of years
13 old -- the one at Long Beach is 500 years old and
14 it survived Katrina. And you add this much salt to
15 the soil here on the Gulf Coast and all those live
16 oak trees are history. As far as the Cypress
17 trees, they are dying all over the swamp now
18 because of Katrina dumping excess salt.

19 Keep our wildlife and our Gulf Coast safe
20 for future generations. Our years are limited, but
21 we have got kids and grandkids coming along. They
22 need to see this river unchanged.

23 This Pascagoula River Basin is very
24 critical to all of us and the future of this part
25 of the country. Let's don't do this project here.

1 Store oil -- we have got the Arctic Wildlife Refuge
2 in Alaska and trillions of barrels of oil. All we
3 need to do is use that naval reserve up there. We
4 have a pipeline that -- Valdez was going to build a
5 gas line through Canada, to the lower 48. Why
6 store oil here at the highest price it's ever been?
7 Economically it doesn't make sense to buy oil at a
8 higher price. And five years from now what is it
9 going to be when you are ready to buy it? 100
10 dollars, 110 dollars a barrel won't touch what it
11 is going to be five years from now. Spend this
12 three or four billion dollars on alternate energy
13 sources.

14 Thank you.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MS. FALEY: Next we have Joan Belote,
17 followed by Stuart Montgomery.

18 MS. BELOTE: My name is Joan Belote,
19 B-E-L-O-T-E. I moved down to Gulfport in '98 when
20 I retired from the Federal Aviation Administration.
21 And I love it here on the coast.

22 Last summer I went on the McCoy boat tour
23 of the Pascagoula River. It was very interesting.
24 I live on Fritz Creek and I have a little boathouse
25 and a little boat. And I enjoy fishing. And I

1 love the wildlife. And when I was on this boat
2 ride with McCoy, he was telling me that they were
3 -- I haven't heard anybody mention this. But they
4 are proposing to build -- I think it was something
5 like a five-million-dollar or seven-million-dollar
6 Audubon Learning Center on the -- right there where
7 the Audubon Center is now, which is just a small
8 house. And I got real excited about it, that --
9 there is not very many of these Audubon Learning
10 Centers. And the fact that we could have one here
11 in Mississippi and how our young people could
12 learn, you know, about the environment. And, you
13 know, I have heard y'all talk about jobs and what
14 this is going to bring. I am three years ahead of
15 baby boomers, so 20 years right on is 78 million
16 baby boomers. And lot of them are going to have
17 time and money to do something like come and check
18 out the Pascagoula River.

19 I went to Corpus Christi last month on an
20 Elder Hostel birding trip. And the highlight of
21 the trip was to see a family of whooping cranes.
22 And the reason it was a highlight is a few years
23 ago they had got down to 13. When we destroy the
24 animals we are not going to even be able to clone
25 one because there is not going to be one to clone.

1 And it's -- when I heard about this
2 Richton salt mine it just really disturbed me. It
3 is just going to kill everything. You know,
4 stupidity is troublesome, but intelligent stupidity
5 is dangerous.

6 Thank you.

7 (APPLAUSE.)

8 MS. FALEY: Stuart Montgomery and then
9 Harry McBride.

10 MR. MONTGOMERY: Hi, y'all. How is that
11 for a misplaced Yankee? I come from Michigan.

12 And four days before Katrina I purchased a
13 home up here off of the Mississippi -- or I should
14 say the Pascagoula River, in the marsh. And if you
15 look at this ceiling, sir, that much more
16 (indicating) is 13 feet. And that is what we had
17 come up the marsh, a 13-foot wall of water. And
18 with it, it brought the salinity. My landscaping
19 is gone. If you look at the ecology of the trees,
20 which are Cypress, they are dead. If, sir, you
21 would take the time to depart a day later or two,
22 we would be happy to take you along our coastline,
23 Highway 90, and look at the struggling trees. As
24 you go back to your motel tonight, pick up today's
25 paper and read the article of where they are trying

1 to pump humus down around the roots to save these
2 trees. And what is this from? It's from salinity.
3 And now you are taking and proposing this. I think
4 it is asinine.

5 It is going to increase the salt. We are
6 here to protest it and I, as one, want to go on
7 record as being against it. You know, I worked for
8 you, Mr. Department of Energy, for all my life. I
9 really did. I was in the insulating business. I
10 was raised in diapers in the insulating business.
11 And I am pushing, as the school teacher, pushing 80
12 years myself.

13 And we saved hundreds of thousands of
14 gallons of oil per year in fuel conservation. And
15 from that I decided I wanted to get bigger and so I
16 worked it from a couple of crews to eight crews.
17 And I employed 33 people. And we became very
18 lucrative. And we specialized, as the doctors did,
19 back in the '60s. Instead of doing everything of
20 home improvements, we decided that we would
21 specialize. And so I could talk to you all night
22 and all next week too about the insulating
23 business. But from that, it grew into heating. I
24 became electricating. I went to air-source heat
25 pumps and then I went to geothermal.

1 I installed 3,700 homes from the fossil
2 fuel industry to geothermal. And this is where I
3 believe the Government should be looking closely.
4 You used to. You used to have tax incentives for
5 people that did this alternative energy. And where
6 is it now? It's lost. But I'll tell you, you
7 could save many thousands of gallons of oil if you
8 would go back into the program and look at
9 alternative energy.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 (APPLAUSE.)

12 MS. FALEY: Harry McBride and then James
13 Tanner.

14 MR. MCBRIDE: I am Harry McBride,
15 M-C-B-R-I-D-E. I reside on Bayou Castille. And I
16 have plowed these waters, so to speak, for the
17 better part of 40 years, not so much down here as
18 up the northern regions of the watershed.

19 I have seen mullet 20 miles up into Red
20 Creek. Okay. That means the salinity has gone
21 that far up. And that is a tough thing to do with
22 a structure that is like it is down here, that is
23 as delicate as it is.

24 You take an inch out of the water, you are
25 going to drop everything along this watershed, from

1 McDonald up in almost north Mississippi, Neshoba
2 County, to Chunky Creek to the West Tallahala.
3 Everything is going to dry up. An inch is a huge
4 amount of water and it cannot be replaced. Once it
5 is gone, it's gone. It is so delicate.

6 I have been -- spent many, many hours on
7 canoes all over this watershed. And it is
8 struggling. It is beautiful, but it has struggled.
9 You take an inch out, it's going to kill it. There
10 is no two ways about it. Okay?

11 I don't know who these people are who
12 think they can come down here and destroy our part.
13 We were preserving this years ago, when people in
14 the other parts of the United States let industry
15 completely ruin their rivers. And they are just
16 now getting them back to what they were. We are
17 not going to let that happen.

18 Louisiana sold out. Texas sold out. By
19 God, we are not.

20 (APPLAUSE.)

21 MS. FALEY: James Tanner and then Terese
22 Collins.

23 MR. TANNER: My name is James Tanner from
24 Vancleave. I just recently retired from Texas and
25 moved back down. And they are trying to take my

1 river away.

2 I hope you people understand the thoughts
3 and the hearts of all of these people. When you go
4 back to Washington, or wherever you go to, remember
5 that -- you know, we have this for ourselves. And
6 we don't want it taken away. We don't want it
7 ruined. But the last ten years as I lived in -- I
8 lived in Texas 35 years. And up around northwest
9 Louisiana, northeast Texas, all the way down to
10 Tyler, Texas, Vivian, Louisiana, Oil City,
11 Louisiana, the United States Government has made
12 the companies shut their oil wells down, to hold
13 oil in the ground. But there is some that has
14 pumped dry. And these oil wells that has pumped
15 dry, they should be pumping oil back in those holes
16 because they already have pipes in there to bring
17 the oil back. It would be a no-brainer.

18 But when you come down here, trying to put
19 oil in a place you are ruining my water supply. If
20 that water pushes back up through the ground, water
21 -- and this earth is honeycombed. And water flows
22 from the northwest to the southeast. But if that
23 water pushes back up into the water system
24 throughout this county, Perry County is two
25 counties away. And everything southeast of it is

1 going to lose their supply.

2 So I want to thank the people here tonight
3 for pressing their say -- their saying about what
4 they believe. And I believe that you are barking
5 up a wrong tree for trying to take my river and my
6 county and my system away. So think of other
7 places, like Texas and Louisiana, putting oil back
8 in those holes where they pumped from.

9 (APPLAUSE.)

10 MS. FALEY: Terese Collins and then Mary
11 Blackwell.

12 MS. COLLINS: My name is Terese Collins.
13 It's T-E-R-E-S-E C-O-L-L-I-N-S.

14 I think this whole process -- we thank you
15 for finally having a public hearing, although it is
16 a half of a public hearing. And we request that
17 when you come out with the programmatic EIS,
18 because that is what I am requesting today is a
19 full-blown, programmatic EIS on this and all the
20 projects the Federal and State government agencies
21 are proposing for South Mississippi. It's needed.
22 It's required. And we need to have it. But when
23 you have the public hearing, we want you presenting
24 the information on stage to the public, not in the
25 divide and conquer section that you had out here.

1 (APPLAUSE.)

2 MS. COLLINS: The format is for State and
3 Federal agencies to do so because that way the
4 public really doesn't have a clue as to what is
5 really going on. And we can't get straight answers
6 because the people standing at the table aren't
7 qualified to answer the questions we posed to them.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MS. COLLINS: The Mississippi Gulf Coast
10 has become known as the Cancer Coast. We don't
11 need you to add to that problem. We have got to
12 find solutions. And we hope that you help us find
13 that solution by placing the Strategic Oil Reserve
14 somewhere else. And we also hope that you find a
15 way to do this in another manner. Putting it in
16 the ground may not be the best way. It may not be
17 the most economical way. And there has got to be
18 other ways to do it. And you just haven't looked
19 for it because politically it is not the thing to
20 do.

21 Alternatives to building the SPR in
22 Richton should be adequately considered and they
23 have not been in your, quote, unquote, EIS. The
24 EIS should also include, like I said, the multiple
25 projects that are planned on the Gulf Coast. And

1 that would make it be a programmatic EIS.

2 The secondary impacts of these projects
3 have to be considered and they are not being
4 considered now. NOAA, CZM, the Mississippi Coastal
5 Program, the Magnuson Act, all the rules and
6 regulations that are in place to protect us are not
7 being used. Or they are being used against us, if
8 anything.

9 Our state agencies are being told by the
10 Governor what to do. We can't count on the State
11 officials and the State employees to do the jobs
12 that they want to because they are told not to do
13 it. We need the local scientists involved, but
14 they have got to be independent of the Governor
15 because they need their jobs. And we understand
16 that.

17 (APPLAUSE.)

18 MS. COLLINS: The terminal and the
19 pipeline are prone to destruction by hurricanes, by
20 human error, by malfunction and by sabotage. This
21 is a solid, strong reason not to put this reserve
22 at Richton or to put pipelines down to the Gulf
23 Coast. There is no way on God's earth for you to
24 protect it. And we can't expect humans to do so
25 either.

1 I was told by someone out at one of the
2 tables that that is the reason you chose the
3 Richton dome and putting the terminals down here,
4 is to get the dome and the salt -- the SPR away
5 from the coastline, to protect them from a
6 hurricane. Well, hell, you are not doing that.
7 You are putting the storage facilities on the
8 coast. They are subject to damage. You are
9 putting the pipelines above ground in a lot of
10 places. They are subject to damage. They are
11 going to be flooded. There are going to be
12 problems. You can't solve that and you shouldn't
13 be putting it here.

14 So don't tell us this is a good idea. It
15 is not. Go back to the books and look at this.
16 And don't put it on the coast.

17 The cost-benefit analysis is pitiful. I
18 was told that you didn't even need to do a
19 cost-benefit analysis because the economics of this
20 project really didn't make any difference. It
21 wasn't part of the study. That is the most
22 ridiculous thing I have ever seen in the 30 years
23 that I have been looking at EISs. I couldn't
24 believe the answer. You have got to do a
25 cost-benefit analysis. You have got to prove to us

1 that the benefits of this project, as a taxpayer,
2 are worth the substantial investment we are putting
3 into it. And I don't think you can do that.

4 (APPLAUSE.)

5 MS. COLLINS: I do want the independent
6 scientists on the Gulf Coast and in Mississippi
7 involved in this project. We have got thousands of
8 them around here. But they have got to be
9 independent of political pressure.

10 Our fresh water resources come from the
11 aquifers that are directly around this salt dome.
12 If this salt dome has been penetrated by pipelines
13 or by oil wells or any kind of other structures in
14 the past, it is subject to damage. The oil can
15 leak. It can get in our aquifers. And then we --
16 and I am from Harrison County. I am not from
17 Pascagoula. I have friends over here. And I have
18 friends in Hancock County. I have friends in the
19 north here, Jones County. They are all concerned
20 about our drinking water. Y'all don't seem to be
21 interested in that or concerned about that. If the
22 oil comes out of that system or if there is any
23 kind of malfunction of any type in this system, our
24 drinking water is subject to disaster. And how are
25 you going to fix that?

1 The next war is going to be a war of
2 water. It won't be a war of oil. Water is a
3 limited resource and we have got to start realizing
4 that.

5 (APPLAUSE.)

6 MS. COLLINS: I do request the public
7 hearing, when you come out with the supplemental --
8 what you are calling a supplemental EIS. I am
9 asking for a programmatic EIS. I want a public
10 hearing not in one county. I want it all over the
11 place, so all of us have a chance to come. Because
12 what you see here is mostly Jackson County
13 residents concerned about the Pascagoula River.
14 You are not asking the people in Harrison County
15 why they are concerned or the people in Hattiesburg
16 why they are concerned or the people in Hancock
17 County why they might be concerned. And if you
18 move this stupid pipeline to suck the water in and
19 suck the water out over to our area, then what are
20 we going to do? I hope you all come to our public
21 hearing, to help us protect our resources because
22 that might be what happens.

23 (APPLAUSE.)

24 MS. COLLINS: In Harrison County we seem
25 to be the sacrificial lamb. We are the development

1 arm, or the armpit, of the coast now. It used to
2 be Jackson County, with the paper mill, with
3 Chevron, with Ingalls. And they are all wonderful
4 employers. We don't want to hurt them. We don't
5 want to get rid of them. We don't want to stop the
6 casinos in Harrison County or the developments that
7 we have there. We need a diversified economy here.
8 We need to be able to have jobs in all aspects of
9 the economic spectrum. But what we don't need is
10 for you to come in here and destroy that. We don't
11 need for you to move this pipeline from one spot to
12 another and subject the rest of us to the problems
13 that are here. We don't need the brine being
14 sucked -- or the water being sucked from the Gulf
15 of Mexico now because somebody doesn't want it
16 coming out of the Pascagoula because the problem
17 still remains the same. You are sucking up the
18 larval animals that our seafood resources depend on
19 to grow and then you are sticking the salt water
20 back out there. And you can't even prove that it
21 is safe to do it.

22 The analyses don't jibe with what is
23 reality. Deep well injection is not a solution to
24 this problem because it will affect the drinking
25 water. And there are other problems with that.

1 Out of sight, out of mind is not the way to go.

2 The Mississippi River is a polluted body
3 of water. We certainly don't want you putting that
4 in the salt dome. And don't even think about going
5 there. But you really need -- the public here has
6 spoken. This is probably -- please don't pick up
7 the red card.

8 This is an unbelievable public hearing. I
9 have been doing this literally for over 30 years.
10 I am 54, I think. I don't remember. 54 or
11 something years old. Sorry, Della. You are a lot
12 older than me. But this is probably one of the
13 best public hearings I have seen since pre-Katrina.
14 And even those started being not attended because
15 we had so many projects on top of us. And that is
16 one of the reasons this one slipped by. But every
17 time we turn around we are having a public hearing
18 on some issue. And we are just being brutalized by
19 having to go to these public hearings.

20 The Corps of Engineers has a coastwide EIS
21 sitting over there. Is any of that EIS information
22 in your EIS? And we are questioning that EIS
23 because it was so pitiful it needed to be redone.
24 And then Katrina hit. We have all been wiped out.
25 I lost my home totally to a slab. I lost my rental

1 home totally to a slab. My business I am building
2 back. I am standing up here talking in front of
3 employers that potentially could stop doing
4 business with me because I am making a political
5 stand. And that doesn't seem to matter to any of
6 y'all. But it matters to us.

7 And the citizens here -- this is one of
8 the most diversified groups I have ever seen at a
9 public hearing. This is what it used to be like
10 here. And I was part of the committee that kept
11 nuclear waste out of the salt dome in Richton. I
12 want to know what in the heck the DOE has on the
13 Richton Salt Dome? What is it about that dome that
14 y'all want so bad?

15 When we kept nuclear waste out of Richton
16 we had the Governor and every senator and
17 representative in the state of Mississippi for it.
18 They are for this project now, but I guarantee you
19 we can change their mind if we have to.

20 Thank you.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. FALEY: Paula Caffey and then Oscar
23 Eckhoff.

24 MS. BLACKWELL: Mary Blackwell.

25 MS. FALEY: Oh, yes. Mary Blackwell. I

1 am sorry.

2 MS. BLACKWELL: I am Mary Blackwell and I
3 am a native of Jackson County.

4 I am very concerned and opposed to this
5 project as it stands now. Since Katrina we keep
6 hearing from our Governor, from officials,
7 committees, et cetera, what a wonderful opportunity
8 we have, a wonderful window of opportunity to build
9 a better state, a better coast, a better county. I
10 guess this is confusing to me because how can we
11 have a better coast or a better state if we destroy
12 our best resource?

13 I hope you will give your full attention
14 and will pay attention to our concerns. You know,
15 this project would not affect me, I'm sure, at my
16 age as much as it would a lot of other people. But
17 we certainly all have a big responsibility to
18 protect the resources that we have.

19 Thank you very much for letting me speak.
20 Thank you.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MS. CAFFEY: When you come back, if you
23 would give us a podium it would be much appreciated
24 by a lot of folks.

25 Tonight I am going to be three different

1 people. The first will be somebody whom I respect
2 an enormous amount, a gentleman named Steve
3 Shepard. He is coastwide chairman for Sierra Club.
4 He could not, unfortunately, be here tonight. He
5 also works for a living.

6 Since the hurricane there are many of us
7 who are no longer able to do the things that we
8 would like to do. We do the things that we must
9 do. One of the things we must do is to stop your
10 stupid project because there is no other word for
11 this project other than stupid. Sierra Club has
12 been fighting this project since the '80s. We are
13 tired of fighting. What point do y'all not get?
14 We don't need to store any oil. We need to make
15 better, efficient choices for our projects.

16 This project needs to go away. We need
17 you to take this to whoever your boss is. This
18 project needs to go away. We have talked it to
19 death. We have spent enough money on it. I don't
20 know how many years it has paid your salary, but it
21 is way too many. You need a reality check. The
22 people who were working in this room beside you,
23 they need a reality check. They can't answer a
24 simple question because they are obviously
25 concerned about their jobs. Why were we there? If

1 they knew none of the answers to none of the
2 questions, why were we in a room next door from
3 2:00 to 8:00? Do y'all get paid extra or bonus
4 time? Those guys deserved zero today because that
5 is what they imparted to people, zero, or a bunch
6 of lies that they continued to tell.

7 I asked a gentleman about a study on
8 hypersaline or brine -- and let me change and read
9 my statement from Steve Shepard first.

10 This is the current DOE plan. It is sure
11 to adversely impact an ecologically important part
12 of the continental United States. That sucks. We
13 are important. We have economic importance and we
14 mean a lot to a lot of folks.

15 It makes the -- industrialization and a
16 planned degradation, an unwise use of a region that
17 in the long run could be developed into an
18 ecotourist destination.

19 Endangered species are threatened in this
20 proposal. And a Gulf Coast site is potentially
21 threatened, an essential fish habitat, under the
22 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.

23 Considering that there are over 500 salt
24 domes in the Gulf Coast area between Texas and
25 northwest Florida, it is incumbent on the DOE to do

1 a thorough, scientifically justifiable study as to
2 why the Richton Salt Dome is the best suited out of
3 500 choices for the extension of the SPR. Just
4 follow the money. There is nothing special about
5 Richton. It is a site. You know, why do you have
6 a fixation on it?

7 Clearly the DOE has failed to consider all
8 practical alternatives and as such must complete an
9 environmental impact statement which will include
10 the number -- an extra number, which would be the
11 no deal alternative. It is obviously the best
12 choice, the no deal alternative. We don't need any
13 part of it here. We don't need an oil storage
14 facility. We don't need pipelines. We don't need
15 you messing with our water. We don't need open
16 loops coming out of the Gulf of Mexico. We don't
17 need open loop systems coming out of the Pascagoula
18 River. We don't need them out of the Leaf River.
19 We don't need any part of the discharge anywhere in
20 the Gulf of Mexico. All it is going to do is build
21 up and build up until it kills off everything we
22 have got, that Katrina left us, that -- besides
23 NEMA, FEMA and you guys have all tried to kill us.

24 The proposal has serious ecological
25 impacts associated from both the short-term and

1 long-terms perspectives. The DOE's current
2 proposal does little, if anything, to minimize the
3 environmental impact on this project.

4 Ms. Collins in a previous statement made
5 mention of a coastwide environmental impact
6 statement. I am requesting that the DOE acquire a
7 copy. It is better than nothing. But so far what
8 y'all had in your environmental impact was nothing.
9 It wasn't even fluff. No specificity. And you
10 can't make comments when there is no specificity.

11 History has shown how destructive oil
12 pipelines are on our wetlands. And they have
13 exacerbated coastal erosion throughout Mississippi
14 and the Gulf Coast. This proposal will destroy
15 hundreds of acres of wetlands directly. And an
16 indirect impact from altering hydrology will
17 further result in degrading wetlands and a loss of
18 wetlands. As such, we assert the new pipeline
19 route must avoid wetlands and be -- instead be
20 directed along existing public or already impacted
21 right-of-ways. If the cost analysis was not a
22 problem, then y'all can do a much better job of
23 picking out a much better site and location for
24 pipelines.

25 Oil pipelines would be run in public

1 areas, through well-established roads in South
2 Mississippi, already cut through wetlands. Those
3 right-of-ways need to be used for laying down pipes
4 for two reasons. First, to avoid creating a
5 separate development scar through the wetlands,
6 which would -- further cutting them up and doubling
7 ecological damage. Secondly, a pipeline near roads
8 can easily be watched for leaks.

9 Currently the oil pipeline is scheduled to
10 be laid from Liberty, Mississippi to Richton,
11 Mississippi and down to Pascagoula, Mississippi.
12 If these pipelines follow the established highways
13 that already traverse these routes, we have the
14 least damaging option in a very sensitive wetland
15 dominated region of our country.

16 We also assert that the recent 2005
17 hurricane season was a clear reminder of the
18 important role wetlands play in protecting
19 communities from floods and storm surge, supporting
20 healthy fisheries and wildlife habitats and
21 promoting healthy waters.

22 Basically in encouraging the destruction
23 of 200 to 1,000 acres of valuable wetlands, our
24 State and Federal agencies must strive to protect
25 these resources for public health protection and

1 economic prosperity and a healthy environment.

2 Furthermore, the DOE has failed to
3 adequately provide evidence that the water must be
4 removed from the Pascagoula River, a waterway which
5 is recognized by the State as a scenic river and a
6 system whose rate has already been shown to be
7 threatened and diminished in recent years.

8 Instead, the Mississippi's flow rate is
9 600 times the flow rate of the Pascagoula, so why
10 not use the Mississippi River? The Mississippi
11 River would never miss six million gallons of
12 water, which is destroyed in the intake. You may
13 even want to check out a survey on the plankton to
14 see what effect it would have on plankton.

15 Needless to say, if the Leaf and
16 Pascagoula Rivers are used over the objections of
17 the Sierra Club, administrative action will be
18 undertaken to determine the short- and long-term
19 biological impacts they are expecting when water is
20 pumped into the salt dome in order to haul it out.

21 Thank you, Steve Shepard.

22 And then I have two short statements. One
23 is for a gentleman from Biloxi. He believes in
24 population control as a way to reduce the use of
25 our resources. He has a concern on the Richton

1 project. He is a retired geologist. His comments
2 was about heavy waves and currents.

3 We have not -- in history on currents and
4 waves there is a lot about what was lost during the
5 hurricane, from the people that had it, which are
6 old-time fishermen.

7 He is concerned that the water is -- the
8 salt is not going to flush out; it is really going
9 to keep flushing back in on it. The waves are
10 going to become so heavy that they are going to
11 change the flow of currents, the ship channel, the
12 canal and the contour of the land. And he wants to
13 know what, if any, information y'all have and hopes
14 that this project not go forward, because it's a
15 bad project, until you have some other information.
16 And that is Dr. Oscar Eckhoff.

17 And then I, Paula, actually have a few
18 statements. I sometimes comment on projects. And
19 you always would consider past, present and
20 cumulative impact. None of this has been
21 considered in this EIS. This EIS is a joke.
22 Whoever y'all paid your money to, you need to ask
23 for a refund because they screwed y'all. We are
24 not going to let y'all screw us. Okay?

25 Only in Mississippi do they have books

1 called Only in Mississippi. You need to check out
2 the library. There are two books, Only in
3 Mississippi I and Only in Mississippi II. In
4 Mississippi we don't just get our pork, y'all are
5 trying to get our salt with it. We don't need it.

6 (APPLAUSE.)

7 MS. FALEY: Ma'am, did you make those
8 comments for Paula Caffey and for Oscar Eckhoff as
9 well?

10 MS. CAFFEY: Yes.

11 MS. FALEY: And Steve Shepard?

12 MS. CAFFEY: The first comment was for
13 Steve Shepard.

14 MS. FALEY: Richie Gaudet.

15 MR. GAUDET: Rodney. Hello. My name is
16 Rodney Gaudet. And I would like to give you a
17 little background. I am a lifelong resident of the
18 Coast. I am not going to tell you my age.

19 The thing is, Mississippi is not a toilet
20 for the rest of the United States. First off, we
21 have already had nuclear testing underground, in
22 which my parents lived within 100-mile radius. And
23 25 miles under the ground they tested a nuclear
24 warhead. That was a stupid idea.

25 Mississippi has the highest cancer rates.

1 You wonder why. You treat us like a toilet. Now
2 you want to give us this. And if I poured this in
3 that bottle of water up there, would that not be
4 poisoning you? You can't drink salt water. You
5 can't live. Nothing in our ecosystem could live.
6 I know you heard from the nice school teacher that
7 was here, it's all elementary. A fifth grader with
8 a science project can tell you that if you dump
9 this in equal parts of water you kill everything.
10 And now I'm going to have to go tell my doctor that
11 you are trying to poison me with salt.

12 You know, oil is not the only thing.
13 Instead of building this dome, which is a stupid
14 idea, take that money and invest it in a smart car,
15 not a stupid car. Because, you know, this idea is
16 stupid.

17 And I asked a question in one of your
18 little booths earlier, I said, Why don't you haul
19 out the salt and then sell it? And they said, No,
20 that don't work very well because when you do that
21 it cracks and it leaks. So are the other salt dome
22 projects around the United States leaking and now
23 you want to use us as an experimental toilet of
24 hauling it out with water pulled from our precious
25 ecosystem? This is crazy. I mean, this is like a

1 Simpsons cartoon. You know, Department of Energy,
2 Doh. I mean, this is wrong.

3 And it's also a sin. This should be a
4 sin. When you try to poison this amount of people
5 with a project -- it's not bad enough that Katrina
6 was wrought upon us. Now you want to do this
7 project. And I don't know who is behind it. I
8 don't really care. But it is bad for Mississippi.
9 It's bad for my children. And if you're going to
10 do this, please tell me now so I can go ahead and
11 prepare to move because my real estate is going to
12 be worthless. South Mississippi is going to be
13 worthless.

14 And I have a great suggestion of where you
15 can put your salt dome. There is a little ranch
16 that is perfect in Crawford, Texas. And, you know,
17 Haley Barbour can afford to move anywhere around
18 the world he wants to, but we are not his toilet.

19 I prefer that this project be scrapped.
20 Take that money and invest it in alternative energy
21 forms. Hitler even invented a Volkswagen bug.
22 Let's get real.

23 Thank you.

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MS. FALEY: Amy Gautier Turner. She is

1 gone? David Turner? All right, David.

2 MR. TURNER: Thank you for listening to
3 all of this and thank you for giving me, speaking
4 just for myself, an opportunity to say what I have
5 to say.

6 You know, Jackson County, Pascagoula and
7 the Mississippi River are already paying a pretty
8 severe penalty -- we really don't know how severe
9 it is -- from unintended consequences of a water
10 project that took place about 50 or so years ago.
11 The primary water supply for the City of Mobile
12 used to flow down the Escatawpa River, out of Big
13 Creek and out the mouth of the Pascagoula River
14 into the Bay of Pascagoula. It now flows through
15 bathrooms and kitchens of the City of Mobile,
16 except when there is too much water up in Big Creek
17 Lake. Then they open the dams and they flood the
18 Porch Lake area and that area in eastern Jackson
19 County.

20 Before that happened, people from that
21 time who lived here were undoubtedly able to go the
22 beachfront at any time and just load up on blue
23 crabs in a couple of hours, a couple of wash tubs
24 of crabs. And old timers would verify that.

25 I just want to read a brief statement on

1 the need to preserve the Pascagoula River as a
2 source of fresh water. Preservation of fresh water
3 sources is as essential to the well being of the
4 United States as is petroleum storage. Ground
5 water supplies are known to be depleting. Serious
6 economic as well as health consequences are
7 foreseeable as sources of the fresh water are being
8 drawn down. Look at the impact of Lake Lanier on
9 Atlanta. Look at the critical state of Los Angeles
10 with respect to fresh water.

11 A strategic petroleum reserve is a good
12 idea, but preservation of one of the last unspoiled
13 nature rivers in the United States is more
14 important. There are alternatives to solution
15 mining that will do no damage to the ecosystem and
16 are economically feasible, without the need to use
17 55 million gallons of water a day for years from a
18 pristine river system. Conversion of the clean,
19 clear water of the Pascagoula River to brine is not
20 a good idea.

21 Thank you.

22 (APPLAUSE.)

23 MS. FALEY: We have come to the end of our
24 registered speakers.

25 MR. JOHNSON: Is there anybody else that

1 would like to make a statement? Please state your
2 name.

3 MS. MIHELICH: Once again, it's Kay
4 Mihelich, M-I-H-E-L-I-C-H, Gulfport, Mississippi.

5 In 2006 I attended a public hearing on a
6 totally unrelated subject. It had to do with land
7 development. And the land developer was encouraged
8 and allowed to conduct his public hearing on, of
9 all days, Mardi Gras. I want, for the record, for
10 whoever reads these statements, to be reminded that
11 in 2005 a number of us here in South Mississippi
12 had other things on our mind in early September of
13 2005 than to be in Jackson, Mississippi, which
14 might have been a mistake because they really meant
15 to be in Jackson County, Mississippi, to hold a
16 similar hearing to what we are hearing tonight.
17 And I want anyone who reads this record to be
18 reminded that it's hard to think that this activity
19 that is being considered is being transparent, when
20 really the wool is being pulled over our eyes.

21 (APPLAUSE.)

22 MR. JACOBSON: My name is Len Jacobson.
23 That is J-A-C-O-B-S-O-N. I live at 802 Washington
24 Avenue. And I was one of the few that addressed
25 this board or this department when a hearing was

1 held two years ago at the LaFont Inn. We had a
2 very small turnout due to the hurricane. And the
3 circumstances were very, very unclear to a lot of
4 people. The turnout tonight has been phenomenal.

5 At the meeting we had two years ago I had
6 some legitimate concerns about how this program was
7 being developed. I was very concerned because we
8 had just been through the worst disaster that had
9 ever been wrought upon our country. And to be told
10 that, you know, a lot of our stuff was being --
11 there were a lot of changes that were going to
12 affect us personally was just a little bit more
13 than we could handle.

14 I truly at that time did not know the
15 proper questions to ask. The answers and
16 assurances that I got from your department were
17 wishy-washy at best. And now, two years later, we
18 are seeing -- we are still getting the same kind of
19 wishy-washy answers. And that is a shame. And it
20 is a shame for us to expect that -- well, we should
21 be able to expect to do better. And I am -- my
22 heart is just soaring tonight for the fact that we
23 have had such a phenomenal turnout for this area
24 and the right questions have been asked.

25 And you have heard from scientists and

1 engineers that know about what needs to be done.
2 And I am hoping you will take this to heart. And I
3 am hoping that we will see some conclusions that
4 are drawn. And I am hoping that this program, as
5 flawed as it is, will either be dropped or
6 reconsidered and improved greatly.

7 Thank you.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MS. CANNON: My name is Lisa Cannon and I
10 debated on speaking or not speaking and originally
11 chose not to speak. But as I sat here tonight and
12 listened, I wanted to bring to light the fact that
13 this other gentleman recently brought to light,
14 which was the Mobile County water system. I am not
15 a scientist and -- but I am a Mississippi swamp
16 tromper. And I say that with every feeling inside
17 of myself.

18 You see, I grew up in a little community
19 of Ford's Lake, which has the Big Creek that runs
20 through it and the Big Creek swamp. When I was a
21 child my dad used to take us fishing on Big Creek.
22 We ran that creek with a boat with a motor. I
23 challenge you today to go up that creek with a
24 canoe because I guarantee you the amount of water
25 that has depleted from there for the Mobile County

1 water system has drastically affected that.

2 As I sat here and listened to the amount
3 of water that would be removed from the Pascagoula
4 River, I had to think, is that going to be the
5 outcome that happens to the Pascagoula River should
6 this move forward?

7 In addition to that, on a positive note,
8 as a child growing up on the Belle Fountain beach,
9 we would go down and I would not see a lot of brown
10 pelicans. Today I do see a lot of brown pelicans.
11 And I attribute that to the common sense of
12 preserving and protecting our natural resources,
13 which I believe is what we are here about today.

14 In addition to that, I don't know if you
15 are aware, but Gautier is known for the birds and
16 the birding. Now, I am not a big bird watcher. I
17 do live in Gautier. And, now, I do enjoy the
18 birds. But those birds depend on the natural
19 resources from our ecosystem. They eat bugs. And
20 yes, I do watch the birds fish. Have you ever seen
21 one slip up a bayou and as it is sitting there it
22 pops its head down and catches a fish? Well, all
23 of those things would be impacted by what you are
24 planning to do.

25 In addition to the fish being depleted, in

1 that regard, let's talk about our natural resources
2 now. When we go fishing we are now limited as to
3 the number of fish we can catch. We are also
4 limited as to the size. If they don't meet a
5 certain standard, we must put them back in the
6 water. Again, what you are talking about doing
7 will impact that even greater.

8 Now, let's talk about Katrina and the salt
9 water that came inshore. And like the other people
10 who have spoken before me, I challenge you to take
11 a ride. Ride up north. Take a look not only at
12 the fish that were impacted and the other delicate
13 systems, but take a look at the trees and the
14 vegetation. In my yard, all of my azaleas were
15 killed. I am not a big azalea fan, but it was nice
16 to have those big shrubs because it afforded me
17 some ounce of privacy.

18 Now, as we looked at these graphs that was
19 presented by the gentleman sitting over here and we
20 saw how that salt water was going to impact and the
21 ebb and the flow, it really concerns me to think
22 that the vegetation, in addition to the things in
23 the water, are also going to be affected.

24 Now, that was because of a natural
25 disaster. We have no control over a natural

1 disaster because it is just that, natural. But
2 this project that you are proposing could be a
3 manmade disaster. And certainly we can control
4 those.

5 In addition to that, I am also concerned
6 in regard to oil leaching into our ground water.
7 Now, I have heard how the salt dome will hold it;
8 don't be concerned about that; it is very safe; it
9 has all been studied. And, yet, this past weekend,
10 I believe in Gautier, we had a collection of
11 hazardous materials, oils, paints and whatnot,
12 because we are so concerned about it leaching into
13 our water. Now, I am trying to get a feel for the
14 amount of oil you are proposing to store in this
15 salt dome and the amounts of oils and other
16 hazardous materials that were captured on-site here
17 this past Saturday.

18 And let's talk about the six to ten miles
19 south of Horn Island. You know, in the grand
20 scheme of things, that is not very far. Because,
21 you see, I live six miles north of Horn Island. It
22 takes me roughly 15 minutes by boat to get to the
23 island. And it's not a big boat. It's certainly
24 not a real fast boat. It's just a little average
25 21-footer. But I think, you know, that is really

1 not that far out. And you are proposing to dump, I
2 believe I understood, water to a degree of -- about
3 100 degrees, more or less. And I have to think,
4 how is that going to impact our entire coastline?

5 Why not take the salt water, if you are
6 going to do this, and let's run the pipeline out
7 50, 100 miles out into the Gulf? Suck it from way
8 out there, pipe it up north, turn around and pipe
9 it back out. Maybe that would be less of an
10 impact.

11 Let's also talk about permitting. Now, I
12 know that with dredging -- and I was just told this
13 today -- that it is going to take about four years
14 for a dredging permit, typically, to dredge our
15 waterways. Well, we need our waterways dredged
16 because of the water that flows out. And it's
17 going to take that long to remove the silt -- and
18 might I say that is natural silt that was brought
19 in by the hurricane. I really question this.

20 And I encourage you to listen to what has
21 been said here tonight and take this to heart and
22 digest it and respect it.

23 Thank you.

24 (APPLAUSE.)

25 MR. SKRMETTA: My name is Louis Skrmetta,

1 S-K-R-M-E-T-T-A. I represent the Gulf Islands
2 Conservancy, Inc. We are a local advocacy group
3 dedicated to preservation of Gulf Islands National
4 Seashore and its surrounding waters. Some
5 wonderful comments were made tonight. And I just
6 want to add quickly that I am heavily involved with
7 the tourism industry on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
8 Ecotourism is a growing industry down here in South
9 Mississippi.

10 They talked a little bit about the
11 Pascagoula and its importance to ecotourism. But
12 remember Gulf Islands National Seashore is an
13 extremely important economic tool for the
14 Mississippi Gulf Coast. People come from all over
15 the world to visit the wilderness islands, Petit
16 Bois and Horn Island, some of the last undeveloped,
17 pristine, unspoiled islands in the country. So I
18 am very concerned about the dumping of these large
19 amounts of salt water, saline solution near --
20 closely to Petit Bois and Horn Island. And I would
21 just ask that you really consider the impact to the
22 National Seashore.

23 Someone mentioned earlier the Tatum salt
24 dome. I was wondering, the Tatum salt dome was
25 subject to nuclear bomb testing some years back.

1 And what impact did the explosions have on the
2 Richton salt dome? And, again, someone mentioned
3 the possibility of an adverse impact to our
4 drinking water. And that is something that worries
5 me a whole lot. And I wish you would spend more
6 time on that area, making sure our drinking water
7 is protected.

8 I just want to end by saying that the Gulf
9 Islands Conservancy appreciates this public comment
10 tonight. And I have made comments earlier, during
11 the scoping phase, and would just ask that all
12 previous comments be made part of Gulf Islands
13 Conservancy's record tonight.

14 Thank you very much.

15 (APPLAUSE.)

16 MS. CAFFEY: Paula Caffey. And I had a
17 couple more things, just like some housekeeping
18 stuff we need to be on for the record. We believe
19 the Pascagoula River and the -- the Leaf, these are
20 options, and we request that that be taken off the
21 table as a viable option of where to move water
22 from.

23 We understand that the Mississippi River
24 has a lot of stuff wrong with it. It's got DDT,
25 toxaphene and many other pollutants that don't need

1 to be moved around anywhere. We don't know how far
2 you would have to go to get away from that kind of
3 stuff.

4 The Escatawpa River, the Pascagoula, the
5 low pH is a problem.

6 Most of you know, Sierra Club sued the EPA
7 on water quality in the state of Mississippi. We
8 have the -- I can't even remember now what all we
9 did win. But, anyway, the DEQ, the Department of
10 Environmental Quality, works with us to have some
11 of the rivers listed as being nonusable from
12 further pollution, until they come up with a
13 program to get them back into a situation where
14 they can be used again.

15 We know that NOAA, National Marine
16 Fisheries had some meetings with DOT this week. We
17 know that they are not happy. I don't think they
18 are any happier with this project than we are. You
19 know, we work really hard to take care of what we
20 have here. I don't know that we have convinced you
21 of that.

22 We expect you to leave here knowing that
23 we expect you to take care of our stuff for us. We
24 are not able always to do for ourselves. But we
25 have learned through volunteers and working with

1 other folks, even if they are people you don't
2 think you would want to be in bed with, that
3 sometimes we can accomplish good things from bad
4 projects.

5 We know that salt kills. I had a pet shop
6 for 20 years. I can tell you what heavy saline
7 does to water, to fish, to plants, to rocks, to
8 metal, to cars. You know, there is not any doubt.
9 So I think it is ingenuous of y'all to sit there,
10 look us in the face and tell us that we are going
11 to discharge high saline brine water, we are going
12 to create hypoxic situations with no oxygen and it
13 is not going to cause any damage to our fishery
14 resources.

15 I would like for you to take this
16 statement back to your people. In the first place,
17 you need somebody new doing this EIS. Barring
18 that, please don't come down here and lie to us.
19 It makes you look stupid and not us. We have been
20 dealing with the same lies for 20 years. Old lies
21 are no better than new lies. You come to us, you
22 treat us with respect, you treat us with courtesy,
23 you treat us with dignity. But you treat it like
24 it was your place. And would you let it happen if
25 you lived there?

1 We don't have a whole lot left to take
2 care of. But we do intend to keep everything that
3 we have got, every gallon of water, every blade of
4 grass, every fishery egg, every fishery resource.
5 We are going to take care of what is ours. We
6 don't need you to help us. We don't need you to
7 take care of it for us. We don't need you to tell
8 us how to do it. What we need you to do is to work
9 with us, so you can get your project somewhere else
10 done, without taking from us or without polluting
11 us anymore. We are no longer going to stand for
12 this kind of stuff.

13 Deep well injection has been recommended.
14 I, like you, don't think it's a good place to have
15 that done.

16 The mineral rights are an issue in this
17 that nobody has delved into a lot. We know who the
18 property owners are. We can find those. We can't
19 always find who owns the mineral rights. For us,
20 following the project of -- where the money is, is
21 generally the answer or the solution.

22 I would like for MDOT, if they are aware
23 of -- if you are going to buy property you have got
24 to know who you are buying it from. If you are
25 buying property and you are not getting the mineral

1 rights, then you are defeating your purpose. So
2 it's ridiculous of us to believe that MDOT does not
3 know who owns what they are attempting to purchase.

4 Another solution would be taking water out
5 one time, recycle or desalinize it. I understand
6 they have some portable desalinizers that they used
7 during the war or on different military sites. I
8 do know some private individuals that may would be
9 interested in talking to DOE. They had done some
10 projects in Mexico, at one of the centers out
11 there, on some desalinizing.

12 But, you know, we can't afford to throw
13 away 55 million gallons of potable water for the
14 next five to ten years. It is insane. It is a
15 waste. It doesn't need to be done.

16 And then a couple of more things, which is
17 -- if cost-benefit is not a problem, I don't know
18 what we're doing here. This is not a
19 water-dependent project. It could be done anywhere
20 in the USA. Past, present and cumulative impacts
21 must be -- not can be -- must be considered. You
22 cannot violate the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Act.
23 You cannot violate the Wetlands Coastal Policy Act.
24 We need to include our coastal wetlands -- our
25 impact statement for the Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

1 We have highly sensitive spots that do or do not
2 need to be considered as situations because of some
3 management plan from the DMR. It needs to be
4 considered utmost. You can't be rezoned and be
5 moving this around. It's worked too well the way
6 it is for years. And I hope y'all have a safe trip
7 home.

8 (APPLAUSE.)

9 MR. SNOW: My name is Terry Snow, S-N-O-W.
10 I appreciate everybody coming out tonight and
11 voicing their opinion. Y'all, I am just as plain a
12 man as you'd ever want to know. You know, I am not
13 elegant. I am not well-schooled. But y'all can
14 see from the people that has been up here tonight,
15 this project is not welcome in Richton, in
16 Lucedale, in Pascagoula. It's not welcome in South
17 Mississippi. And I wish that y'all would take this
18 back to Washington, or whoever, and find something
19 else to do with it because we don't want it. And
20 y'all can see that.

21 I feel like we are trying to -- I say
22 y'all, but the Federal Government is trying to cram
23 something down our throats that we don't want. And
24 I know the people. And we'll fight it, fight it
25 like nobody ever has before, because this means

1 something.

2 Thank you.

3 (APPLAUSE.)

4 MR. JOHNSON: Well, first of all, I want
5 to thank everyone for spending their time in coming
6 here tonight. It has been very impressive,
7 everybody who came out here to provide us with your
8 comments.

9 I just want to say, you know, these
10 comments have been received. We have heard these
11 comments from you. We really appreciate you giving
12 them. And it's our deepest need to do this
13 project, if we are going to do it, in a very safe
14 -- environmentally safe and sound manner. And in
15 the meantime -- now, the next step is really for us
16 to finish the scoping period and move on to a new
17 draft EIS. But in the meantime, we are going to be
18 working with both the communities as well as the
19 environmental groups to really determine where we
20 are going to go on this.

21 I want to make a reminder that the public
22 comments are all due by the end of this month,
23 April 29th. And so they can either be e-mailed,
24 they can be mailed. We really would like for you
25 to get all of your comments in.

1 Anyway, at this time, I would like to
2 close the session. Thank you very much for your
3 comments. Myself and my staff will be all around
4 here to answer any questions, further questions you
5 have. And thank you very much for coming.

6

7 (THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

COUNTY OF JACKSON:

I do hereby certify that the above and foregoing transcript of proceedings in the matter aforementioned was taken down by me in machine shorthand, and the questions and answers thereto were reduced to writing under my personal supervision, and that the foregoing represents a true and correct transcript of the proceedings given by said witness upon said hearing.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the action, nor am I anywise interested in the result of said cause.

RHEANNON R. MILLER

ALCCR-503

Court Reporter